A NEW EDITION corrected, with ADDITIONS.

LOUISA;

OR, THE

COTTAGE ON THE MOOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

——— "Ye good diſtreſt!
"Ye noble few! who here unbending ſtand
"Beneath life's preſſure; yet bear up awhile;
"And what your bounded view, which only ſaw
"A little part, deem'd evil, is no more!
"The ſtorms of wintry time will quickly paſs,
"And one unbounded ſpring encircle all."

DUBLIN:

Printed by BRETT SMITH,

FOR MESSRS. MONCRIEFFE, COLLES, BURNET, GILBERT, WOGAN, BURTON, BYRNE, H. WHITESTONE, PARKER, BROWN, LEWIS, MOORE, JONES, HALPEN and DORNIN.

MDCCLXXXVII.

BRITISH MUSEUM
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PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

THOUGH introductory matter, at the first view, may appear very simple, yet an intelligent reader will readily admit the necessity of it: indeed, from its very general use in the world, we may term it highly essential. To prove this figuratively, we will suppose a timid visitor making a first appearance amidst a group of fashionable belles and beaux,

who, inſpite of every modeſt external, loudly join in cenſuring the poor ſtranger, becauſe he or ſhe happen to fall under the unlucky predicament of being one, that,—nobody knows. An admired author ſays, "A compoſition that enters the world with a view of improving or amuſing it, has a claim to our utmoſt indulgence, even though it fail of the effect intended." More might be ſaid on the ſubject; but if we believe the aſſeverations of ſome eminent publiſhers, Eſſay-writing is totally out of faſhion; character, or rather caricatura, is now the rage. For my own part, I am not faſhionable enough to enjoy the outré part of the creation; therefore ſhall content myſelf with expoſing vice only; as for harmleſs abſurdity, it ſhould ever reſt in good-nature's lap.

I doubt

I doubt not but there are among the number of thoſe, who may caſt a glance on my rural building, many who prefer a more exalted and dignified ſtructure: need ſuch to be told, cottages were prior to palaces? that the beauty and regularity of architecture were not the work of a day? This conſidered, candid criticiſm will relax a little of its ſeverity in favour of a female candidate, whoſe errors (I truſt) are thoſe of the head, not of the heart. Men of might, be merciful!—let not the torrent of your diſapprobation ſweep away my humble dwelling, nor expoſe with a too harſh ſeverity the imperfections of my fabrick to eyes leſs diſcerning than your own.

To my fair readers, I need ſay little: virtue and humanity are the natural growth of their boſoms: conſcious that neither

neither of these heavenly attributes will receive the least check from my Louisa, I doubt not their candour; and if my heroine merit one tear of sensibility, I shall be amply satisfied.

It remains now only to say, that as natural fiction, judiciously blended with diversity, is the most agreeable characteristic of Novel-writing, that relation must be doubly pleasing, which boasts of out-lines founded in truth, and can point to living examples of suffering virtue (in the end) meeting their due reward.

☞ *This edition is divided into chapters, mottos added to each, and the whole carefully revised.*

CONTENTS.

CONTENTS

OF THE

FIRST VOLUME.

CHAP. I. Page

A Wanderer - - - 1

CHAP. II.

Friendſhip - - - 6

CHAP. III.

A melancholy Narrative begun - 11

CHAP. IV.

Continued - - - 19

CHAP. V.

Continued - - - 26

CHAP. VI.

Continued - - - 40

CHAP. VII.

Narrative concluded - - - 53

CHAP. VIII.

Louiſa's Story begun - - 65

CHAP. IX.

Continued - - - 74

CHAP. X.

Continued - - - 90

CHAP XI.

Continued - - - 101

CON-

CONTENTS

OF THE

SECOND VOLUME.

	Page
CHAP. XII.	
Louisa's Story continued -	5
CHAP. XIII.	
Louisa's Story concluded -	18
CHAP. XIV.	
A Letter, and a Separation -	30
CHAP. XV.	
A Meeting - - -	38
CHAP. XVI.	
A friendly Letter - -	53
CHAP. XVII.	
A Challenge - - -	65
CHAP. XVIII.	
A Duel - - -	74
CHAP. XIX.	
An unexpected event - -	85
CHAP. XX.	
A Visit. - - -	97
CHAP. XXI.	
Mr. Belmont's Narrative - -	103
CHAP. XXII.	
Villainy - - -	118
CHAP. XXIII.	
Suicide - - -	134
CHAP. XXIV.	
Conclusion - -	142

BRITISH MUSEUM 15 65 NOV

LOUISA:

OR, THE

COTTAGE ON THE MOOR.

CHAP. I.

A WANDERER.

Night, ſable goddeſs, from her ebon throne,
In rayleſs majeſty, now ſtretches forth
Her leaden ſcepter o'er a ſlumb'ring world.
Silence how dead! and darkneſs, how profound!
Nor eye, nor liſt'ning ear, an object finds!
Creation ſleeps. 'Tis as the gen'ral pulſe
Of life ſtood ſtill, and nature made a pauſe;
An awful pauſe! prophetic of her end.

YOUNG'S NIGHT THOUGHTS.

AT the foot of a high hill, on a large tract of barren land, known by the name of Stanmore, about ſeven miles from Kendal, in the county of Weſtmoreland, ſtood a ſmall cot, whoſe thatched roof tempted not the midnight robber; nor yet

whoſe penurious aſpect ſeemed to refuſe (in this dreary ſpot) comfort to the diſtreſſed traveller.

On a froſty night, the latter end of December (when the mild radiance of the moon, to a mind at eaſe, might have made even this rough ſcene delightful)—the inhabitants of the cottage were diſturbed by a loud knocking, which was anſwered by a female voice, who from a window in the upper ſtory, demanded the reaſon of this late alarm! Accents which at once beſpoke pity, and claimed from the humanized mind immediate ſuccour, reached the ear of the interrogater to the following purport:—"Alas! if you refuſe me entrance, here muſt I periſh. I have wandered amidſt theſe wilds till cold has almoſt deprived me of ſenſation." The ſtranger ceaſed.——The hoſpitable wicket opened wide, and diſcovered to the pitying portreſs a female ſinking with fatigue; the ſuccouring arm of Mary (for ſo was the attendant of the cottage named) was immediately held out.—"Fear not, Madam, ſaid ſhe, lean on me, I will conduct you to my miſtreſs, who will gladly afford every aſſiſtance in her power." With feeble ſtep and ſlow the benighted ſtranger reached the apartment of the miſtreſs of this humble manſion, who roſe to receive, and welcome her unex-

BRITISH MUSEUM 15 NOV 85

unexpected gueſt; then turning to Mary, ordered her to bring ſome warm wine, and mend the half extinguiſhed fire. Mary had a heart that needed no prompting to tenderneſs and humanity, her miſtreſs was therefore immediately obeyed.

When the ſtranger had taken ſome refreſhment, and vital warmth diffuſed itſelf on her limbs, ſhe returned ſuch thanks as convinced Mrs. Rivers, (the miſtreſs of the cottage) that her prepoſſeſſions in favour of her new gueſt were not ill founded. The ladies now had leiſure to examine each other, though not with the ſupercilious eye of envy with which the modern Belle obſerves her cotemporary in dreſs and faſhion: here every freſh glance diſcovered a new grace, or additional virtue, ſuch is the power of ſympathy on uncorrupted minds. The ſtranger found her entertainer poſſeſſed of beauty, though at the age of thirty-ſix, nor was it leſſened by the plain mourning habit ſhe wore. Native dignity ſhone conſpicuous, though woe had ſtrongly marked her lovely features with his iron traits. The fair wanderer (who was named Louiſa) appeared to Mrs. Rivers about ſeventeen; ſhe was tall and elegantly formed, her complexion of the moſt tranſparent fairneſs, her lovely down-caſt blue eyes ſeemed ſureties that innocence and vir-

tue dwelt within. The pale bluſh of her cheek was admirably contraſted by the vermilion of her lips, which opened on rows of pearl; bright auburn locks, (whoſe ringlets needed not the aſſiſtance of art) fell negligently on her ſnowy neck; In fine, ſhe was lovelineſs itſelf, without the aid of ornament.

For ſome moments, did the humane Mrs. Rivers ſurvey the lovely diſtreſſed in ſilent ſorrow, her ſurcharged heart overflowing in pearly drops, to think ſo delicate a form ſhould be expoſed to the dangers of the night, and inclemency of the ſeaſon; curioſity, though in general predominant in a female breaſt, was here abſorbed by gentle pity. This tender ſenſation was however changed into a ſudden ſtart, and look of horror, on perceiving ſeveral ſpots of blood on the fair ſtranger's habit; and her inquiring eye ſeemed to demand explanation of what ſhe almoſt dreaded to hear!——Mrs. Rivers's ſtrong emotion was not unobſerved by Louiſa, who caſting her eye downward, perceived the cauſe: "You have ſeen, Madam, ſaid ſhe, what till this moment was unknown to myſelf; think not unfavourably of me, if I appear confuſed, it is not from conſcious guilt, but the recollection of dangers which I have this night eſcaped; this blood was ſhed in a mo-

a moment of deſperation, to preſerve a wretched girl her only poſſeſſion." "Alas! returned Mrs. Rivers, can any thing authoriſe a deed ſo ſhocking to humanity?"—— "Yes, Madam, replied Louiſa, the defence of innocence and virtue; but for that wound, which, however, I hope is ſlight, I had been deprived of both. If I have not already too far treſpaſſed on your goodneſs, I will relate the cauſe of my appearing before you in this ſtrange ſituation, and at ſo late an hour."

The innocence of Louiſa's manner, and readineſs to ſatisfy any doubt, pleaded ſtrongly with Mrs. Rivers (in whoſe boſom ſhe had a powerful advocate from the firſt moment of their meeting.)—"Not to-night, ſaid that lady, your exhauſted ſtrength and ſpirits require reſt. If you can ſpare a little time from happier connections, I ſhall be much pleaſed with your company at the cottage." Louiſa raiſed her eyes to heaven, deeply ſighed, bowed her thanks, and retired with Mary, who waited to light her to her chamber.

CHAP. II.

Friendſhip.

Tir'd Nature's ſweet reſtorer, balmy ſleep,
He, like the world, his ready viſit pays
Where fortune ſmiles; the wretched he forſakes;
Swift on his downy pinions flies from woe,
And lights on lids unſully'd with a tear.

YOUNG'S NIGHT THOUGHTS.

ON Mary's return, ſhe found her miſtreſs loſt in thought, which ſhe interrupted by exclaiming "Bleſs me, Madam, do you recollect any one like this young lady?" "No," returned Mrs. Rivers; "Then, Madam, replied Mary, you muſt have forgot yourſelf, when about her age, for the former part of your life is renewed in her every look and motion." Mary awakened a painful ſenſation, and recalled affliction gave its accuſtomed tribute—— a tear. "Let us hope, Mary, ſaid the good lady, a happier fortune than mine awaits her, whatever may be the reſemblance of our perſons."

Mary, though in a ſtation of life inferior to Mrs. Rivers, had a heart replete with goodneſs, and ſincerely accorded with that lady

lady in her well-wiſhes to the fair ſtranger, whom they did not fail to remember in their oriſons to that Power, who ſometimes (for his own wiſe purpoſes) may chaſtiſe, but is never deaf to the prayer of the virtuous.

And now, for a few hours, the inhabitants of this lonely cot were loſt in ſilence, though ſleep refuſed its ſoft dominion over Mrs. Rivers and her fair gueſt: the former reflected with amazement on the ſtrangeneſs of her meeting with ſo lovely a girl, and, if for a moment the idea withdrew itſelf, a heavy ſigh from the latter (from whom ſhe was only ſeparated by a ſlight partition) again gave it freſh ſtrength. Towards morning, their woe-worn ſouls forgot their ſorrows in gentle ſlumbers, but ſoon Louiſa waked, and fearing ſhe might keep her hoſpitable entertainer waiting, haſtily roſe and went down to the apartment ſhe was in the night before. Mrs. Rivers having not yet made her appearance, ſhe had an opportunity of obſerving the cottage, which the confuſion of her thoughts the night before prevented. It was plain, and the only thing that could make it ſuperior to any other, was neatneſs, a ſmall harpſichord, two ſhelves of books, containing ſome of the beſt theological and poetic works extant. All further examination was ſtopped by the entrance of Mrs. Rivers,

Rivers, who again welcomed and ſaluted her fair viſitor. Louiſa now offered to fulfil her laſt night's promiſe, and give her kind entertainer ſome account of herſelf. "You promiſed me, laſt night, your attention, Madam, ſaid ſhe, may I now intrude?" "I had rather, returned Mrs. Rivers, that a few days ſhould calm that perturbation of ſpirits, which at preſent ſo viſibly diſturbs you; a recital of what is ſo lately paſt, will but renew your ſorrows; in the mean time be aſſured, I believe you innocent of ill, nor would I for the world, think the contrary. If you can prefer this ſolitude to the gaiety of the world (which at your age muſt have charms), you are welcome: Nay, no thanks (for Louiſa attempted to ſpeak), I am the obliged. I find myſelf attached to you by a power, which I neither ſtrive or wiſh to withſtand." Louiſa's breaſt was too full for utterance; tears uſurped the place of words, which the amiable Mrs. Rivers perceiving, changed the ſubject by telling her fair gueſt it was the hour appropriated for morning devotion. "We have not, continued ſhe, a church nearer than ſeven miles: for my own part, I do not think prayer leſs acceptable to the Almighty, though aſcending from a cottage." After about an hour paſſed in ſupplication, Mary retired

retired to the call of Induſtry; and Mrs. Rivers to furniſh a change of linen for Louiſa, who cleared her habit of thoſe ſanguinary drops with which it was ſpotted.

The remainder of the day was ſpent in converſation; and friendſhip, ſwift as the moments flew, increaſed in their ſympathiſing boſoms: but though Louiſa felt its ſoothing power, ſhe could not reſtrain the riſing tear; her agitation was conſiderably increaſed, when the little clock on the table ſtruck ſix: "Exactly at this time, ſaid ſhe, laſt night, I began my weary walk —after ſuch a ſcene—the wound I gave—Heaven pardon me—'twas deſigned for my own boſom—but thy all-ſeeing eye directed my trembling hand, and fixed it in his vicious arm." Recollection could no longer ſuſtain the painful idea—ſhe ceaſed and fainted. Mrs. Rivers flew to her aſſiſtance, and with the aid of Mary (who was almoſt as much attached to her as her miſtreſs), ſhe ſoon recovered, and apologized to her benefactreſs, who, though grieved at her ſituation, was not diſpleaſed to hear the wound ſpoke of, was in the arm, from thence concluding it not dangerous; and though ſhe much wiſhed to hear the whole

of this myſterious relation, yet the goodneſs of her own heart would not permit that of Louiſa's to be wounded by the recital of misfortunes, whoſe impreſſions were ſo freſhly engraven on it.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

A melancholy Narrative began.

—How beautiful is death when earn'd by virtue!
——What pity is it
That we can die but once to ſerve our country!

ADDISON'S CATO.

WHEN Louiſa's tears had a little ſubſided, and penſive calmneſs had again taken poſſeſſion of her boſom, Mrs. Rivers, to divert her thoughts from a recollection of paſt ills, addreſſed her in the following manner: "My dear Louiſa, excuſe my calling you ſo, friendſhip deals not in compliment, I will inform you how I came to take up my reſidence in this deſolate uninhabited ſpot. You, I truſt, have many hours to come; my misfortunes are beyond the reach of fate; here have I paſſed theſe laſt fifteen years, and here do I mean to finiſh my weary pilgrimage."—A half ſmothered ſigh now heaved the boſom of the gentle narrator, on recounting events ſtill painful, though long paſt; while the ſoft radiance of Louiſa's eye gave the tribute of a commiſerating

tear

tear to ſorrows, which (for a while) ſuſpended the recollection of her own. A pauſe of a few moments enſued, which was interrupted by Mrs. Rivers deſiring Mary to ſet a glaſs of water before her; this done, that Lady recounted her ſtory as follows:

" My father was the only ſon of a gentleman of ſmall fortune, who had a place in one of the public offices, which brought him about four hundred pounds a year. By living up to the full of what he poſſeſſed, he had it only in his power to procure a pair of colours for his ſon; who, however, did not remain in that ſtate long; for bravely diſtinguiſhing himſelf, and officers of higher rank having loſt their lives in the ſervice of their country, he ſoon obtained a company. The regiment being much diſabled, was ordered home, where, after remaining two years, he cloſed his only parent's eyes (his mother expiring in giving him birth.) Being left without friends or relatives, he wiſhed ſincerely to be recalled to Flanders; which, in a little time, happened. Soon after his arrival in that country, he married the daughter of an officer lately dead, who had two thouſand pounds in the Britiſh funds. I was born in about a year after this marriage, and the year following, my father was

again

again ordered to England, to the great joy of my mother. In ſhort, not to tire you, we returned home, and paſſed five years of inexpreſſible felicity. My father being on full pay, and my mother an excellent œconomiſt, her ſmall fortune remained in the funds, except the intereſt, which ſhe received yearly. This happineſs was too great to be laſting; my father was again ordered to Germany, my mother (whom nothing could diſſuade) being determined to accompany him. I was, after numberleſs tears on all ſides, placed in a reputable boarding ſchool, a gentleman of the name of Rivers, who had been greatly inſtrumental to the promotion of my father, having the care of me.

" At this ſchool I remained for more than three years, hearing from my parents every opportunity. Though my grief at their firſt going was very violent, yet the company of my youthful mates ſoon changed it to a pleaſing wiſh for their quick return.

" Mr. Rivers (my Guardian) was married to a very amiable lady with a large fortune, who (by her tenderneſs in ſupplying all my little wants) I regarded as a mother, and by her conduct it was plainly evinced our affection was reciprocal.

" In

" In one of my vacations (which were always ſpent with her) ſhe was gloomy and melancholy, and if by my careſſes I ſtrove to know the cauſe, ſhe would turn and wipe away a tear; at length, fearing I might hear (not in ſo tender a manner as herſelf diſcloſed it,) ſhe informed me of the death of my father, and her expectancy of my mother's return. My grief was exceſſive at this mournful news, and not decreaſed by her arrival ſome days after, attended with a hearſe, in which was the body of my affectionate parent. Her look was ſo changed, that it was ſcarcely poſſible to recollect her; and her grief, which was not of the violent ſort, ſeemed the ſettled gloom of deſpair. Sometimes ſhe gazed on me till the tears which were pent up in her overcharged heart, burſt forth and eaſed her labouring boſom; then ſnatching me in her arms, exclaimed,—' I will conquer this unavailing grief, and live to protect all that remains of the beſt of men—it was his laſt deſire—Merciful Heaven give me ſtrength to obey him.'

" Mrs. Rivers tried every method friendſhip could deviſe to comfort her, and not without difficulty perſuaded her to ſuffer the loved clay ſhe had brought ſo far, to be depoſited in the family vault of the Rivers.

" My

" My mother has ſince told me, the day preceding that on which my father loſt his life, ſeeing her drowned in tears, he intreated her not to give way to ſorrow; that whatever might be the event of the following day, to live for my ſake; —' beſide, my love, ſaid he, we have known more happineſs in theſe few years than many experience in their longeſt lives. Then wound not your heart with evils that may never happen, but with your uſual ſerenity expel the gloom your tears have ſpread on my ſpirits.'

" Alas!—my mother's forebodings were too true; when my father, after embracing, parted with her in the morning, ſhe remained in a ſtate almoſt of inſenſibility, until the entrance of a ſoldier ſhook her from her reverie. He informed her (with reſpect, and as much tenderneſs as his time would allow) that his captain had received a wound; that fearful of alarming her in that ſtate, he had ſent this meſſage in ſome meaſure to prepare her for the ſhock.—' They have killed him then!' ſaid ſhe, with a look that ſpoke her inward horror.—' No, madam, he is not dead; his lamenting ſoldiers are now bearing him home.' Scarcely had he pronounced it ere they entered with my father in their arms, who had received a muſket ſhot in his

his breaſt. My unhappy mother remained rivetted to the ſpot, her eyes raiſed to heaven, and loſt in agony unutterable. My father holding out his hand, ſaid,—'My dear Emily, why will you think ſo deeply? I have only paid the debt every man owes to God and his country. I am ſpared to breathe my laſt ſigh in thy arms, to bleſs thee and our little one before I quit this for a happier ſtate: had I expired without the ſatisfaction of bidding thee adieu, grief had then been more juſt.' 'Alas!—returned my mother,—why do you attempt to ſpeak comfort to a wretch bereaved of every hope?' 'Again, let me entreat you, ſaid he, not to waſte the little time allotted me in unavailing ſorrow: would you deprive our dear child of the only ſupport and guardian of her youth? for now, Emily, you are her all.'—The entrance of the ſurgeon prevented his ſaying more, who, after deſiring my mother's abſence, examined the wound, which he pronounced mortal. My father calmly anſwered, I feel not for myſelf, I knew it was fatal the moment I received it; but for that amiable woman who has juſt left us, let me intreat your tendereſt care; perſuade her to return to England as ſoon as poſſible. Alas! ſhe has no one here to ſpeak comfort

fort in her affliction; to you, ſir, I apply, having proof of your humanity by the attention you paid a ſlight wound I received the firſt engagement I ever was in. Let me intreat you to wear this ring (taking one of value from his finger) as a memorial of my friendſhip.' The ſurgeon received the ring, and promiſed to fulfil his requeſt. My mother now entered, ſilent and ſad; the ſurgeon offered to withdraw. 'Do not go, ſaid my father, I feel a little faint; Emily, give me your hand, for heaven's ſake take comfort.' Nature almoſt exhauſted, he fainted—my mother imagined him dead, caſt her deſpairing eyes firſt on him, then to heaven, and fell ſenſeleſs by his ſide; the ſurgeon was obliged to call aſſiſtance, as both remained deprived of ſenſe and motion. My father firſt revived, and my unhappy mother, by the uſe of drops, was ſoon reſtored to the painful ſcene before her.

'Now, my dear Emily, ſaid this affectionate huſband, let me conjure you no longer to detain, by your violent emotion, my ſoul in this painful tenement, but kneel and join with me, in intreating protection for you, and pardon for my offences from that Power whoſe mercy I doubt not.' She dropt on her trembling knees.

My

My father ſeemed to pray for about a quarter of an hour, then feebly preſſing my mother's hand, faintly pronounced—'Almighty God, protect her'—bowed his head upon her breaſt, and expired."

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Narrative continued.

——the wintry blaſt of Death
Kills not the buds of Virtue; no, they ſpread
Beneath the Heavenly beam of brighter ſuns,
Thro' endleſs ages, into higher powers.

THOMSON'S SEASONS.

MRS. Rivers ceaſed, and dropt a filial tear: Louiſa's long reſtrained ſympathiſing ſorrow burſt forth. After a pauſe of a few minutes, the eldeſt of the Ladies roſe: "I had this account, my dear Louiſa, ſaid ſhe, from Mr. Bennet (the ſurgeon who attended my father). But we will talk no more on theſe mournful ſubjects to-night; to-morrow we will renew them; it is now almoſt ſupper time. The interval we will ſpend in muſick." She ſat down to the harpſichord, and ſoon convinced her gueſt, though now hid under a thatched roof, ſhe had harmony of voice and execution of finger that would have graced a drawing room.

When the hymn was finiſhed, Louiſa agreeably ſurpriſed her, by playing in her

her turn, attended by a voice whoſe ſweetneſs might have taught melody to the ſoft breathings of the flute.

Mary now entered with their ſupper, which conſiſted of vegetables and eggs. Mrs. Rivers apologized to her gueſt, by informing her the butcher viſited them only weekly, at which time they took proviſions for the ſpace till his return. "As to other things, Mary viſits Kendal three or four times a year; our bread is baked at home, and our little garden, by the induſtry of an old man who ſometimes attends, ſupplies us with a great deal. When I firſt retired here, Mary bought a quantity of fowls; but I grew ſo attached to my feathered companions, that I would not by any means have them hurt. They well repay our kindneſs, we have plenty of eggs, which is of material ſervice to us."

The ſupper finiſhed, our gentle cottagers retired to reſt; and balmy ſleep (kinder than the night before) ſoon overcame their woes in airy viſions of ideal happineſs.

Soon as the morning gave light, which was not till the hour of ſeven, Louiſa roſe, and after intreating the guidance of that Power, whom neither proſperity, or adverſity, could make her forget, deſcended

to

to the parlour, from the window of which ſhe paſſed her time (till Mrs. Rivers joined her) in ſtrewing crumbs to numberleſs birds, which the bitterneſs of the weather forces to draw nigh to the habitation of inhuman man, who, regardleſs of the mercy that ſhould accompany the image of his Creator, as they chirping intreat his favour, barbarouſly ſhoots, and eaſes their wants, by laying them breathleſs on the frozen ground.

Others, unmindful of the joys of plenty, a gentle conſort, and playful children, who by their cherub ſmiles intreat their ſtay, haſtily riſe, ere the day begins to dawn, and galloping over hedge and ditch, purſue with unwearied ardour—a trembling hare, who flies even at the ruſtling of the leaves. Unmanly taſk! if you muſt delight in ſuch pleaſures, ſeek not a timid foe, from conquering whom, no honour can reſult. Such were the meditations of Louiſa's gentle breaſt, until joined by her kind entertainer; breakfaſt was then introduced, after which the day was ſpent by our new acquainted friends, much as the preceding one. Towards evening, Mrs. Rivers thus continued her narrative.

" For a fortnight after my father's death, my unhappy mother remained inſenſible, in which ſtate her woes had certainly

certainly concluded, had not the unwearied care and attention of Mr. Bennet, who ſpared no means that art or friendſhip could deviſe, to ſave her life, reſtored her ſenſes to a painful tranquillity.

" Finding her one day more compoſed than uſual, he informed her of my father's deſire, that ſhe ſhould return to England as ſoon as poſſible:——' Alas! ſaid ſhe, I wiſh to claſp my fatherleſs child, but never can I leave the remains of the beſt of men, in a country that has murdered him, and rendered me the moſt wretched of women.' ' I have thought of this difficulty, ſaid he, and provided for it: the body of Mr. Clairville is incloſed in lead, and may be removed with eaſe; therefore, let me intreat you to obey his laſt commands, nor remain longer in a place, which, inſtead of diminiſhing, will but increaſe your grief.' She returned thanks, accompanied by many tears, to this worthy man, whom ſhe deſired to write Mr. Rivers an account of her misfortune; and now ſhe needed no haſtening to depart, as the remains of her beloved huſband were to accompany her.

" She arrived in England three weeks after Mr. Rivers received the letter. In

Mrs.

Mrs. Rivers ſhe found a ſympathizing friend; for him, (though he profeſſed vaſt eſteem for my father, and had indeed materially ſerved him) he was ſo loſt in pleaſures, as gave little time for any thing but the complimentary condolence of faſhion.

" After ſome little time, my mother and myſelf retired to a ſmall houſe in Berkſhire, where her time was ſpent in perfecting me in what I had already learned, and teaching me muſick. The amiable Mrs. Rivers often honoured our little habitation with her company, alleviating my mother's uneaſy thoughts of leaving me friendleſs (as ſhe viſibly declined) by promiſes of friendſhip, and protection.

" In fine, ſomething more than three years after loſing one parent, I became an orphan. My mother, finding her diſſolulution near, wrote to Mr. Rivers, entreating his protection of me; he returned an anſwer, with a promiſe on his honour to execute her requeſt. Now, for the firſt time ſince my father's death, (though unable to leave her bed) ſhe ſeemed cheerful. As I knelt weeping by her ſide,— ' Maria, my love, ſaid ſhe, do not weep; if you knew the anguiſh I have long ſuſtained, you would rather rejoice than grieve,

grieve, that in laying down pain, I take up never-ending happineſs. Mrs. Rivers will ſupply my place; with her you will not want a mother's tenderneſs; obey her, look on her as my repreſentative, and may you never know ſuch ſorrow as your unhappy mother.'

Mrs. Rivers ſtopped, and had recourſe to the water that ſtood by her ſide; then raiſing her eyes to heaven,—Alas! expiring ſaint, ſaid ſhe, thy unhappy daughter was doomed to experience thy fate to its utmoſt limits, — widowed — childleſs — friendleſs, and yet to live to bear a load of woes for years. But Louiſa, I diſtreſs you; pardon me, it was involuntary; in a moment I will continue and haſten to the end of this painful narrative.

"The evening after Mr. Rivers's letter arrived, my mother ſlept for ſome hours; near ten ſhe waked, and holding out her hand, ſaid with a ſmile, — "Maria, the hours of pain are paſt; methought in this bleſt ſleep, my ſoul had quitted its earthly tenement, and reached the realms of bliſs. The firſt bright ſpirit I met was thy father:—Now, Emily, ſaid he, grief is changed to joy, we meet to part no more.' Though I felt inexpreſſible delight, I could not refrain ſaying—Alas,

Maria

Maria is left behind. Fear not for her, returned he, though various ills ſurround her, ſhe will go ſmoothly down the vale of life. He led me on, and I was loſt in rapture.' She ceaſed, and by the motion of her lips, ſeemed to pray for about an hour, when preſſing my hand, which was incloſed in hers, articulately ſaid,—Clairville, I come; and without a ſigh, reſigned her ſoul to the Almighty Giver."

CHAP. V.

Narrative continued.

——Nature all
Wears to the Lover's eye, a look of Love,
And all the tumult of a guilty World,
Toſs'd by ungenerous paſſions ſinks away.

THOMPSON'S SEASONS.

"I Shall paſs over what followed; ſuffice it, the generous Mrs. Rivers fetched me two days after, leaving orders for my mother's funeral, who was removed and laid by my father.

"Mr. Rivers welcomed me with tenderneſs, and after ſome time, I grew tolerably compoſed, endeavouring by attention to oblige my only friends, nor was my aſſiduity unſucceſsful; Mr. Rivers ſeemed fond of me, and his lady was indeed a ſecond mother.

"I had lived near three years at Mr. Rivers's, when a nephew of that gentleman, the ſon of his only brother, arrived in England; he was about twenty years old, the laſt ſix he had paſſed in the Eaſt-Indies with his father, who poſſeſſing a younger brother's fortune, ſought to improve

prove it in that country; however, at the expiration of that time, his patrimony was only increaſed from five to eight thouſand pounds, which, when dying, he bequeathed to his ſon, paying the compliment to his brother Rivers of making him truſtee, till Henry acquired the age of twenty-four. This young gentleman, joined to an agreeable figure, a cultivated underſtanding, and a heart free from vice; he was preſumptive heir to Mr. Rivers, who was childleſs. No wonder that, poſſeſſed of ſuch a mind and perſon, Henry made an impreſſion on my unexperienced heart, an impreſſion, though youthful, that will laſt till this agonized breaſt ſhall ceaſe to heave a ſigh to his beloved memory.

" Our partiality was mutual, on my ſide, hid in my own breaſt; on his, ſhewn in a thouſand little attentions, which to an indifferent eye might paſs for friendſhip, but to a man poſſeſſed of a knowledge of the world, like Mr. Rivers, was eaſily diſcovered.

" Young, unexperienced, what was my ſurpriſe, to find another perſon acquainted with what was almoſt unknown to my own heart. Mrs. Rivers, ever aſſiduous to ſmooth the thorny paths of life, was by the call of ſoft humanity,

(a call ſhe never reſiſted) obliged to attend an expiring friend, a few miles from London, purpoſing to paſs the night there, and return the following day. I was prevented accompanying her, by a ſlight cold, and the order of the phyſician, who deſired me not to venture out.

" I had dined with Mr. Rivers and Henry, after which, the eldeſt of thoſe gentlemen ſaid to his nephew,—' Henry, will you give me your company this evening? Henry obeyed, and I retired to Mrs. Rivers's dreſſing-room, where taking up a book, I continued reading until a gentle tap at the door diſturbed me, which when opened was Mr. Rivers! ' Maria, ſaid he, you ſeem ſurpriſed, I want ſome tea, will you do me the favor to make it?' I bowed, but my eyes were fixed on the door, expecting Henry's appearance; my abſence of mind was not loſt on Mr. Rivers, who divined the cauſe. ' I have left Henry, ſaid he, at Mrs. Selby's aſſembly; he ſeemed entertained, and not willing to diſturb his mirth, I ſlipped out, as I have ſome unavoidable buſineſs this evening.' I felt an unuſual glow on my cheeks, at his ſo eaſily gueſſing my thoughts.—' Do not bluſh, Maria, continued

nued he, at finding me acquainted with the ſtate of your heart. I have for ſome time perceived it, for believe me, the eye of true friendſhip reads the thoughts of thoſe it eſteems. But let me intreat you, my dear girl, (taking my hand) not to ſuffer an idle, childiſh paſſion to take root in a breaſt I ſo much value. Henry does not deſerve you, he is unacquainted with your worth: he is too young; and (I am ſorry to add) too gay to think of marriage. Do not believe, my charming Maria, I have any mercenary views in this advice; no, on my honour, your happineſs is my only concern; and ſo far from thinking your alliance would diſgrace my family, I ſhould think you the brighteſt gem that ever adorned it. Indeed, Sir, ſaid I, not daring to lift my eyes, never can my heart, where gratitude is predominant, ſo ill repay the many favours conferred (had even Mr. Rivers a partiality for me, which I am not vain enough to imagine) to conſent to what muſt leſſen him in the opinion of his family, and deprive me of the friendſhip of one I value above my exiſtence. I eſteem, I reſpect Henry's virtues; he, taught by the example of Mrs. Rivers and yourſelf, may ſhew too much reſpect to an unfortunate girl, who,

ſpoiled by kindneſs, ſometimes forgets her duty.' 'Nay, now you are too grave, ſaid he, and highly over-rate any little favours you may receive, and which your merit might intitle you to tenfold; but tell me, my ſweet girl, who is the friend you value *above your exiſtence?*' Mrs. Rivers, Sir, and happy ſhall I think myſelf, if ſhe will accept my endeavours through life to oblige her; I wiſh no other ſituation; a happier I cannot have.' 'So, Maria, then I am quite excluded, ſaid he.' 'Pardon me, Sir, I eſteem, I reverence you, nor fear any thing more than your diſpleaſure, which I hope I ſhall never experience, nor ever deſerve. 'What froſty words have you choſe! Maria, ſaid he,——eſteem, reverence, and fear; you might have ſpoken far more pleaſingly, by ſubſtituting a ſhort word, which I will uſe in return for your chilling ones:——I love you, your fortune ſhall be my care, ſo pray no more of thoſe humiliating phraſes, to one who regards himſelf as the obliged party.' A ſervant now entered with a letter, which demanded his immediate attendance; he roſe, and kindly wiſhing me good night, retired.

" As ſoon as he was gone, I gave free vent to my tears; alas! cried I, 'tis too true,

true, Mr. Rivers's ſuſpicions are not falſe, I fear I love Henry too much for my own peace; but did I eſtem him more, and his love were equal to mine, never will I diſgrace him by a match ſo inferior. Though my heart may ſuffer, it ſhall never ſwerve from the duty I owe the generous Mrs. Rivers; no, my much-loved ſecond mother, I love no one ſo well as you.

" I was prevented ſaying more, by the unexpected appearance of Mrs. Rivers, who preſſing me to her breaſt, exclaimed, ' wipe off thoſe tears, my child, and ſuppreſs this riſing anguiſh; thy boſom is the ſeat of innocence, and let her bright traits be ſeen in every feature.' Ah, madam, returned I, Mr. Rivers has diſcovered that I am not worthy your eſteem, yet has treated me with a tenderneſs that wounds worſe than the hardeſt uſage; indeed I knew not my own heart, till he diſcovered it to me.' I will have no explanations to-night, my love, ſaid ſhe, interrupting me; to-morrow we will talk, now you ſhall retire.' Without waiting my anſwer, ſhe rung for Mary, who now lives with me, and had attended me ever ſince my mother's death. Seeing me ſtill in tears at parting, ſhe affectionately kiſſed me.—' Good night, ſaid ſhe, you have called me your mo-

ther, and believe me, ſuch you ſhall find me.' Tears were my only reply, and I retired with a heart overcharged with duty, love, and gratitude.

" I paſſed a painful night, wiſhing for morn; when I ſaw it approach, I would gladly again have exchanged it, ſo much did I dread the ſearching eye of Mr. Rivers; for his lady, I rather wiſhed, than feared her preſence; predetermined to acquaint her with the ſtate of my heart, and depend on her friendſhip and counſel, for the cure of its every foible. I roſe with the ſun, paſſing my time between that and the breakfaſt hour, in vain attempts to calm my troubled ſpirits, twenty times waſhing away the tears that inflamed my eyes, and as often diſfiguring them again: at length the bell rang, and with trembling ſteps I reached the parlour, but found my terrors groundleſs, as the object of them was not yet riſen. Mrs. Rivers and Henry being alone, the latter viewed me with an inquiring tenderneſs, the former kindly aſked of my health. Ah! Madam, ſaid Henry, look, and you need not aſk, ſhe is much worſe; but my dear ſiſter (a name he often called me) why do you leave your apartment?' I know not how, but I involuntarily exclaimed, 'would to heaven I were

were your ſiſter, then ſhould I have ſome little claim to the friendſhip of your excellent friends; but I am an orphan, bankrupt even in thanks.' 'Then, Maria, I am your brother by a double tie; am not I an orphan as well as yourſelf? —my mother taken from me before I knew my loſs; my father ſpared, till years had acquainted me with his worth, then ſnatched from me, to ſhew the inſtability of mortal happineſs.' 'Really, ſaid Mrs. Rivers (affecting a ſmile) you young folks are very entertaining; believe me, you have both too much ſenſibility for your own peace. Henry (I reflect with pleaſure) is heir apparent to Mr. Rivers, conſequently is my ſon, nor can I wiſh a worthier; for you, my dear child, you have a yet nearer claim, — a promiſe to a dying friend, and ſhall I dare violate what the Almighty heard, and recording angels wrote? No, Maria, you are mine, both by promiſe and inclination: then oblige me, by no more calling yourſelf an orphan, as you make me feel you experience the loſs of a parent.'——The overflowing of my heart, ſtifled my thanks, and I could only preſs my benefactreſs's hand to my lips in ſilence. She now changed the diſcourſe: 'You do not aſk me, Maria,

why I returned ſo unexpectedly laſt night.' 'I am generally ſo obliged to the occaſion, madam, as not to think of the cauſe.' ——Ah, you flatterer, the cauſe was a very happy one, (ſaid ſhe) my friend had eſcaped from all her calamities before I arrived, ſo my ſtay was needleſs, and I returned almoſt immediately to town.'

" Breakfaſt now finiſhed, Mrs. Rivers ſaid, 'Maria, our young friend muſt excuſe us.' I followed her to her dreſſing room, where ſeeing my trembling lips prepare to open, 'Peace, Maria, ſaid ſhe, you are not to be the ſpeaker, only a hearer. I have already told you the reaſon of my return laſt night; in paſſing through Duke-ſtreet, ſome triffling accident happened to the chaiſe wheel, by jolting againſt another carriage. The ſervant intreated me to get out, and being almoſt oppoſite to Mrs. Selby's, I alighted and went in. After paying my compliments to her, I walked through the rooms, which were full of company. The gay widow, Mrs. Modely, was playing at cards, but ſeeing me, called, 'my dear Mrs. Rivers, your company a moment.'—I turned and was ſurpriſed with the ſight of Henry, who I imagined was not acquainted there.— 'you muſt know, continued ſhe, that I am

am almoſt mad with this handſome nephew of yours—from the Eaſt Indies indeed! it is more like he came from Iceland, regarding all us fine women with the indifference of a ſtoic, not ſo much as paying us one compliment.'—' I think, ſaid Henry, it is the greateſt mark of admiration to be ſilent; unuſed till within theſe few months to ſuch bright aſſemblages of beauty, no wonder I ſhould be ſtruck dumb; but tell me, my dear madam, (turning to me) how came we to be ſo happy to have your company to night?' I acquainted him with my little misfortune, which I had hardly told before the ſervant came to inform me it was repaired; Henry's looks ſeemed to ſay I ſhould oblige him by accepting an offer he made of accompanying me home, and we wiſhed the company good night, and entered the chaiſe, where Henry informed me of his attending his uncle to Mrs. Selby's, that he ſtaid there only a ſhort time. ' Well Henry, ſaid I, is it poſſible you can be ſo inſenſible to all the beauties at the aſſembly to night?' ' Really, madam, totally ſo,—to me they appeared ſo certain of the power of their all-conquering charms, that I was ill-naturedly determined to ſhew them that one ſtupid wretch could view them with

with indifference. If ever I pay my devoirs (the lady's beauty out of the queſtion) ſhe muſt have innocence of manners, purity of heart, and humanity to aſſiſt her indigent fellow creatures with what thoſe fair gamblers loſe at cards. When I meet ſuch a one, who will deign to ſhare my ſmall fortune, I ſhall joyfully lay it (with your conſent) at her feet.'

" If my conſent is neceſſary for a deſerving object, you may always command it, ſaid I, but Mr. Rivers, I fear, views merit as inferior to fortune.'— ' Ah, madam! can a pupil of Mrs. Rivers be unworthy?—Now you are miſtreſs of my ſecret; with Miſs Clairville only can I ever experience happineſs;— poſſeſſed of her, eight thouſand pounds will be a fortune for a monarch.' ' You talk like a young man in love, Henry, ſaid I, but both parties are yet too young to marry; but were it otherwiſe, your uncle's conſent is abſolutely neceſſary, and that you will find difficult to obtain.'

' The chaiſe ſtopped, and my firſt queſtion was for yourſelf. John anſwered in the dreſſing-room, but did not mention his maſter; I ran haſtily up ſtairs, telling Henry we ſhould be glad of his company in half an hour; my maid

maid not expecting my return, was out, ſo I went to the dreſſing cloſet to leave my cloak and gloves; the partition between that and the room you were in, is extremely thin; ſtopping a moment to diſtinguiſh if ſome ſtranger was with you, what was my amazement to hear Mr. Rivers ſpeak of Henry in terms I am ſure he does not deſerve! In ſhort, the oddneſs of what I firſt heard, tempted me to hear to the end, and happy was I when the ſhutting of the door informed me of his departure.—Now you ſee, my dear girl, I did not want to be informed, as I knew each circumſtance, though acquainted with it in a manner I muſt ever bluſh to think of.'

" The certainty of being beloved by Henry and the goodneſs of Mrs. Rivers, operated ſo ſtrongly on my weakened ſpirits, that had I not been relieved by tears, I ſhould have fainted: this amiable friend ſtrove not to ſuppreſs them, till ſome little time had abated their firſt violence, then kindly embracing me, ' Maria, ſaid ſhe, your mother had not your happineſs more at heart than myſelf: I would wiſh to ſee you married, though know not how to part from you; with Henry the ſeparation would be trivial. Though I ſpoke to him of your age, let

it

it be no objection, as there cannot be ſo ſtrong a ſafeguard to youth and beauty, as a beloved and virtuous huſband.' Stranger to diſguiſe, I made but this objection: "Mr. Rivers will look with horror on one that he will deem has ſeduced his nephew.' 'That muſt be my care, ſaid ſhe,—heaven forbid I ſhould make uſe of the power allotted me in any other cauſe than that of virtue, eſpecially againſt my huſband. You were too young Maria, to be acquainted with my affairs, but muſt now know, my marriage with Mr. Rivers was at the interceſſion of an uncle, who was my guardian, and a bachelor: on my bridal day he paid down my paternal fortune of twenty thouſand pounds, with an addition of ten more, which he preſented me.—Alas! I fear Mr. Rivers's principal view was money. I know not how, but by ſome means my relation became acquainted with ſome youthful foibles of Mr. Rivers's, and the old gentleman dying ſoon after, left me near as much as I firſt received, together with a landed eſtate, and manor-houſe in Kent, to the value of two thouſand pounds a year, tying the eſtate ſo ſtrongly to me, that no one elſe can receive the rents, and totally at death to bequeath to whom I pleaſe. The groſs ſum I preſented to Mr.

Rivers,

Rivers, the yearly income I have uſed to aſſiſt the friendleſs, Mr. Rivers having no occaſion for it, his fortune trebling that. Now, my dear girl, I have pointed the means by which I can aſſiſt you, nor will Mr. Rivers openly avow diſpleaſure at what I ſhall authorize. You will ſay I have entered haſtily into this matter;— ſpare me, Maria, ſpare me the reaſon; I have promiſed to protect your innocence, nor can I ſecurely do it any other way.' So ſaying ſhe haſtily roſe (the tear glittering in her eye), and retired.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Narrative continued.

But happy they! the happieſt of their kind,
Whom gentler ſtars unite, and in one fate
Their hearts, their fortunes, and their beings blend.

THOMPSON'S SEASONS.

" AFTER her departure, I ſat pondering on her laſt myſterious words, for ſuch they ſeemed to me. ' My innocence in danger! cried I; impoſſible—I ſcarcely am acquainted with any man but Mr. Rivers and Henry; the latter ſhe mentioned as virtuous, and ſhall I dare ſuſpect the former? Her words were dark, yet without ſome hidden reaſon, would ſhe ever conſent to a clandeſtine proceeding, and riſk diſpleaſing a huſband, whoſe every deſire ſeems law.' I then tried to recollect each word he uttered the evening before, which my confuſion at that time prevented: the recollection rather confirmed

firmed than removed my doubts.—Alas! he demanded more than reverence and eſteem, I think he mentioned love:—merciful heaven! am I here to ſtrew diſcontent, when I ſhould think my life too poor a ſacrifice for Mrs. Rivers's peace? My diſagreeable reverie was here interrupted by Mary, who informed me, Mrs. Rivers deſired my company in the drawing-room, adding—'and indeed, Miſs there is the moſt pleaſing looking man with her I ever ſaw: when I went in, Mrs. Rivers told him of my living with your mama, and that I was much attached to you: he anſwered, he was ſure I was a good girl, and took my hand; I was ſo aſhamed, that I ſcarce received my meſſage, but haſtened to you.'

"I compoſed my features as well as poſſible, that they might not be an index of the contending paſſions that dwelt within, and obeyed my ſummons to the drawing room, where I was repoſſeſſed, like Mary, in favour of the ſtranger, who was a likely man, ſeemingly about the age of thirty-eight. He roſe at my entrance.—'Ah! madam, ſaid he, it is indeed the daughter of my friend, the living image of her angel mother;' and he embraced me with a fatherly affection. Mrs. Rivers then informed me his name

was

was Bennet (the ſurgeon I have before mentioned.) My uſual timidity vaniſhed when I heard his name: 'Where ſaid I, have you been loſt ſo long? many times did my mother wiſh to ſee you once more, to repeat her thanks.' The tear of recollection ſtood in my eye; his rolled down his manly cheek. 'I remained in Germany, ſaid he, till four months ago, as I found my buſineſs very beneficial there. On my return to England I ſought Mrs. Clairville with the greateſt aſſiduity, but could learn no tidings till I had the honour of ſeeing Mrs, Rivers, when I learned the melancholy event I dreaded.

"In ſhort not to tire you, this good man viſited us conſtantly, and at length made a proffer of his hand to Mary, who did not want much perſuading from Mrs. Rivers to accept it: and on the wedding-day preſented Mary with five hundred pounds; myſelf not interfering, ſo ſorry was I to part from her. During this interval, I cautiouſly avoided being a moment alone with Mr. Rivers. For Henry, he made a tender of his heart, which I was not coquet enough to deny, nor prude enough now to conceal, gave me pleaſure; beſide, he had a powerful

advocate

advocate in Mrs. Rivers, though indeed he wanted none but my own heart.'

"The ſummer was now advancing; we removed to a ſeat of Mr. Rivers's, in Nottinghamſhire: that gentleman (great as the diſtance was) often viſited the capital. During one of theſe excurſions, I was walking one evening alone in a bye road that led to the village; perceiving a letter on the ground, I ſtooped to pick it up; it ſeemed to have been lately opened, and by the neatneſs of the folding, not rumpled by keeping, but rather ſlipped aſide in putting in the pocket: curioſity (as it was open) prompted me to look at the contents, but judge my ſurpriſe when I read, as near as I can recollect, theſe words:——

'GEORGE,

'Be ready with the chaiſe exactly at twelve to-morrow night: Young Rivers is obliged to attend his uncle at Nottingham, on particular buſineſs, ſo we have nothing to fear from that quarter. All muſt be managed, if poſſible, without alarming Mrs. Rivers,—not much danger of that, Miſs Clairville's room being ſo diſtant from hers; be punctual, as you expect

pect your reward, which will be proportioned to the ſervice you render us.'

'I know not how I had power to read this horrid letter, but my eye no ſooner reached the end, than haſtily turning homeward, I fled with a precipitation that might have eluded my betrayers had they been purſuing me; for ſo powerfully had fear poſſeſſed itſelf of my ſenſes, that I did not ſtop till I reached the parlour, where Mrs Rivers and Henry were waiting my appearance at tea—Oh Madam! protect me, ſaid I, my ruin is determined.'—My agitation prevented more, and I fell ſenſeleſs on the ground. Henry raiſed me, and called for help, and with the aſſiſtance of my amiable benefactreſs, ſoon brought me to myſelf, and ſeated me on a ſopha between them, each taking a hand: Henry opened that which ſtill held the letter;—'Here madam, ſaid he, this is perhaps the cauſe of her agonies.' Mrs. Rivers ſoon read the contents with great emotion, and then returned it to Henry, who at the concluſion exclaimed,—'My Maria was not formed for a ruffian's prey; the protector of innocence has ſhewn the danger, that ſhe may eſcape it:—Ah Madam! we have your conſent, then, Maria, give me a legal right,—a huſband's right, which who ſhall dare violate?'

Over-

Overcome with ſhame, I hid my face in Mrs Rivers's boſom.—' Lift up your head, my dear girl, ſaid ſhe, and obſerve me; I ſee no ſecurity in any other plan but that Henry has ſo haſtily formed, for ſhould you eſcape this ſnare, no doubt freſh ones will be laid, of which we may not be fortunate enough to be appriſed. I know you love each other; the difference of forms, or a few months is immaterial, and ſhould you ſtay that time, I fear the conſent of Mr. Rivers will be equally hard to obtain. My advice is, that Henry and you ſhould ride, attended only by the groom, whom you may contrive to ſend back on ſome meſſage, then take the bye road to Mansfield, where you may procure a chaiſe and four; tell them to return the ſaddle horſes the day following, make the beſt of your way to Scotland (as Maria wants yet four years of being of age) be married at the firſt place you legally can. Myſelf will uſe every endeavour to reconcile you to Mr. Rivers, if which fails, the Almighty, who knows the uprightneſs of my purpoſe, has put it in my power to provide for you.'

" My confuſion prevented an anſwer; for Henry, he was on his knees, returning Mrs. Rivers thanks in the higheſt raptures. Seeing my tears,—' Ah, madam, ſaid he, your

your generous propoſal meets Maria's diſ-approbation; rather let me protect her ſome other way, than ſhe become the victim of too much gratitude.' 'Why will you, returned I, diſtreſs me by an idle ſurmiſe, or rack my heart ſtill more?—alas! in giving my hand I give all, ſo long have you poſſeſſed my heart.

'I wiſh, ſaid Mrs. Rivers, Henry, you would retire for about an hour; I would paſs that time with Maria alone, who muſt compoſe herſelf that nothing be ſuſpected.' He obeyed, preſſing our hands firſt alternately to his lips.

"Now this amiable woman repeated every thing that friendſhip or tenderneſs could deviſe to comfort me: when ſhe had in ſome degree ſucceeded, and my lips were uttering the language of gratitude, ſhe ſtopped me.—'You have no obligation to me but what a promiſe can return, make me that, and I am your debtor.'—Ah madam, what can you aſk that I will not promiſe, that I will not fulfil at the hazard of my life? 'Then, my dear girl, though I could wiſh you to have no concealments from Henry, but let an ingenuous candor ſhine in every action, for without mutual confidence happineſs is impoſſible; yet, in pity to him and compaſſion for my peace, let your ſuſpicions of Mr. Rivers

(for

(for I know you muſt ſuſpect him) be hid in ſilence. We have no proofs, nothing but ſuſpicions, which, if diſcovered, would make an everlaſting breach between the uncle and nephew: beſide, if his intentions were as bad as our fears, he thinks you ignorant of them; then, my dear girl, let them remain in our own breaſts. If you ſurvive Mr. Rivers and myſelf, you are at liberty, and may plead for excuſe a promiſe to me, to whom your honour is dear as my own.'

" She ceaſed, and I promiſed what ſhe deſired. After ſome time Henry joined us, and the evening paſſed with as much tranquillity as could be expected; fear, however, that my betrayers might even come before their time (for the date of the note appointed the following night) agitated me ſo much, that I diſcovered it to Mrs. Rivers:—' Fear not, my Maria, ſaid Henry, I purpoſe not to ſleep, for my fears equal yours.' My benefactreſs, however, thought it beſt for me to pretend an inclination to read, and ſo diſmiſs my ſervant, and afterwards to return and paſs the night in her chamber. It was ſettled and executed; myſelf riſing early, returned to my own room, where the ſervant, when ſhe came to call me, found me already dreſſed.

I now

" I now wiſhed for my dear Mary, who would have made my flight far more pleaſing; but ſhe was ſettled in London with her huſband. I had taken a change of linen in my pocket; my riding dreſs making every thing elſe unneceſſary.

" We met as uſual at breakfaſt; when the ſervants were withdrawn Mrs. Rivers addreſſed herſelf to Henry:—' I need not commend, my dear nephew, Maria to your care, of your prudence having no doubt.' ' When I forfeit your good opinion, ſaid he, may I become the outcaſt of all mankind.' ' I know you will not, ſaid ſhe: one thing more, when you return from Scotland, write to me, but in a manner I may ſhew to Mr. Rivers, as I would not have him think I act in open oppoſition to his commands.'

" After ſome little time ſhe rung to order the horſes; ' I muſt haſten you, I ſee,' affecting to be cheerful:—' Fear not, Maria, we have, I doubt not, many happy hours to paſs together. When I receive your letter I will immediately anſwer it, by deſiring you to go to my houſe in Kent, where I will ſoon ſee you.' For me, my feelings at this parting were neither relieved by words or tears, and I embraced her with agony unutterable. She

now

now retired to her chamber, to conceal ſentiments ſimilar to my own.

" Henry, though pained at our parting, could ſcarcely conceal his ſatisfaction, which I reproved. ' Can it be otherwiſe? ſaid he; am I not going to be united to you, by the tendereſt ties, which only death can break? Can you blame my raptures? for which I almoſt thank the letter that brought about this bleſt event.

" The ſervant entered to ſay the horſes were ready.——Henry aſſiſted me to mount. Raiſing my eyes to take my farewell of the manſion, I perceived its amiable miſtreſs at one of the windows, who forcing a ſmile, and kiſſing her hand, looked an adieu.

" We now rode off; at the end of three miles Henry ſtopped his horſe, and called the groom, telling him to return and ſay to Mrs. Rivers, we ſhould ride to Sir Thomas Thornton's, as I had never ſeen his gardens, and probably ſhould not return to dinner. The man obeyed, and we reached Mansfield by twelve o'clock. A chaiſe was immediately prepared, and we travelled the remainder of the day,

all night, and the day following; in ſhort, we arrived ſafe at the place of our deſtination, which was a ſmall village at the entrance of Scotland. We were no ſooner united, and proper certificates taken, than we returned to Penrith, at which place my Henry determined to wait an anſwer to a letter he immediately wrote to Mrs. Rivers. We remained at Penrith ſeveral days, which time we ſpent in ſeeing the country. In one of theſe excurſions we rode over part of this moor; we were both pleaſed with it, and returned for three days, viſiting different parts of it, a ſervant from the inn attending to carry cold proviſions. My Henry was particularly charmed with this ſpot, on which we ſat two days to dine. In this place where my cottage now ſtands, my much loved huſband caught me in his arms:—— 'Here, my love, ſhould the world forſake us, ſaid he, part of our little fortune might built a cot, the reſt ſupport a life of rapture, which the greateſt might envy: poſſeſſed of thee, Maria, I aſk no more.'

"Pardon me, Louiſa, I muſt leave off, for the preſent; recollection is painful,

painful, and though religion has, in ſome degree, made me compoſed under my misfortunes, yet cannot I forget paſt happineſs:—no, my beloved huſband, thy idea is never abſent." Louiſa's tears flowed faſt as Mrs. Rivers's.—' Alas! ſaid ſhe, that I ſhould be the occaſion of your reciting woes which make every wound time's lenient hand had almoſt cloſed, bleed afreſh.' " Believe me, no, my love, ſaid Mrs. Rivers; did not tears daily relieve my full heart, I muſt long ſince have bid adieu to a world, which to me has been a draught of bitterneſs; but come, Louiſa, I will not infect you with my melancholy, reach a book, and read for half an hour." She obeyed, and read Pope's Meſſiah in a manner that diveſted her auditor of every other ſentiment but the divine ſubject.

Mary made her appearance, bearing their evening repaſt, which placing on the table, would have withdrawn. " Stay, ſaid her miſtreſs, take your uſual ſeat, I will no longer ſuffer ceremony to deprive me of my companion; Louiſa will be equally pleaſed with your company as myſelf."

ſelf." Louiſa, whoſe ſoul was affability itſelf, immediately roſe. "If you knew the pain you make me feel by this miſplaced complaiſance, I am ſure you would not do it; it is I that am ſo lately an intruder, that ſhould give place." Mary could not reſiſt her ſolicitations, as ſhe by this time had placed her a chair. They now ſat down to their vegetable ſupper, with a thankfulneſs and peace that I fear are not always the companions of more ſumptuous entertainments, and then retired to reſt with minds ſo free from guile, that had they waked in eternity, neither envy, malice, or any other diſcordant paſſion would have prevented their everlaſting welfare.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Narrative concluded.

——— The News arrives:
Untold, ſhe ſaw it in her Servant's eye.
She felt it ſeen (her Heart was apt to feel).

YOUNG'S NIGHT THOUGHTS.

LOUISA was much ſurpriſed in the morning at the ſight of a ſtrange female, aſking Mary if ſhe belonged to the cottage; ſhe was informed it was a perſon who lived about half a mile from them, nearer the high road, for whom (being a widow in very indigent circumſtances) Mrs. Rivers had built a little cot, in which, with her father and three children, ſhe now lived: " and, conti-

nued ſhe, by my miſtreſs's aſſiſtance, and feeding a few ſheep on the moor, makes a decent livelihood. She comes to us three or four days every week, at which times ſhe makes us bread, for which we have an oven, and likewiſe performs all the houſehold work, to which I am unequal. Her father tends our little garden; they are the only neighbours within ſome miles."

Mrs. Rivers now entered, and kindly aſked the mother of her children's health, adding, as it is a fine froſty morning, what think you of a walk, Louiſa? to the which Louiſa aſſenting, was after the morning occupations executed.

Mrs. Rivers and her young friend, accompanied by Mary, directed her ſteps between the hills, whoſe high tops ſheltered them from the wind. "I think, ſaid Mrs. Rivers, I cannot have a better opportunity than the preſent to finiſh my melancholy ſtory, as my ſpirits too are tolerably eaſy." Louiſa bowed, and Mrs. Rivers began.

"Henry received an anſwer from his amiable aunt in eight days, deſiring us to go to her houſe in Kent, at which

which place ſhe would meet us. In the poſtſcript, ſhe added, Mr. Rivers had received the news of our marriage better than ſhe expected.

" We ſet out the next day, the third night from which we reached her ſeat; it was only twelve miles from London; and the morning after I claſped my benefactreſs in my arms, who, after mutual congratulations, informed me, that on my not returning the day of the pretended viſit, my maid had been extremely inquiſitive, had gone out, and remained a conſiderable time; ' and though I ſat up the whole night, continued ſhe, there was not the leaſt noiſe, from whence I concluded ſhe was in the ſecret, and went to give information of your abſence, and accordingly gave her warning. Now, my dear Henry, I would have you immediately return to London, and pay your duty to Mr. Rivers; I ſhall remain with Maria ſome days, as I have already told him.'

" Henry ſoon after departed for town, after which I informed Mrs. Rivers, that Henry, on our journey to Scotland, had inquired of me, if any one had ever addreſſed me, from whom

whom I could ſuppoſe that letter came: I replied in the negative, that I had ſeen no one but in the preſence of the family. She thanked me for my tenderneſs (as ſhe expreſſed it) of her peace: 'Mr. Rivers returned, ſaid ſhe, the third day after your elopement; he betrayed no ſigns of paſſion or anger, but was gloomy and thoughtful, which I hope will paſs off, and all be well.

" Henry returned the ſame evening; his account of his uncle agreed with Mrs. Rivers's; he ſaid, on his entering the parlour, Mr. Rivers ſtarted: 'So, Sir, you imagine you have duped me, —begone and beware my revenge. After ſome recollection, he accepted Henry's excuſes, ſeemed more reconciled, but appeared loſt in thought.

" In ſhort, to haſten to the fatal hour that deprived me of every earthly happineſs, I ſhall paſs over ten months of bliſs I paſſed with my dear huſband, which was often increaſed by the addition of Mrs. Rivers's company. Alas! how many years of ſorrow have followed, what appeared to me a moment, ſo ſwiftly did it paſs! I lived entirely in Kent; Mr. Rivers never deſiring to ſee me, I carefully avoided

his

his preſence, nor once viſited London in that time.

" One day, my dear Henry had been at his uncle's, he returned very melancholy; after much intreaty, he told me the cauſe; Mr. Rivers had received letters from India, that the perſon with whom my Henry's fortune was entruſted, was dead; that his executors were contending about the eſtate; that without his appearance to make good his claim (which Mr. Rivers would empower him to do,) he muſt infallibly loſe it.

' Ah! cannot I go?' ſaid I. ' Impoſſible, my love, conſider your ſituation: for indeed I was far advanced with child. ' Had it not been for my uncle's imprudence, continued he, in not recalling my trifling fortune, this had not happened. A ſcene followed, which a mind poſſeſſed of ſenſibility, like yours, Louiſa, can better imagine than I deſcribe; ſo painful ſtill is the remembrance, that I muſt paſs over the remainder of my ſtory as ſlightly as it will permit. Mrs. Rivers arrived from town; ſhe had heard the news, and joined her tears with mine. Said ſhe, ' I cannot ſee ſo violent a ne-

ceſſity for Henry's going; eight thouſand pounds cannot hurt Mr. Rivers's eſtate; but alas! he is determined, and we muſt obey. Raiſe your dejected ſpirits, my love; I will never leave you; Henry can truſt to my care, and ſhould the angel of death remove me, ſtill is Maria not deſtitute.'

"In ſhort, after ſeveral interviews with Mr. Rivers, it was fixed for my loved huſband to go with the firſt ſhip that ſailed, which was in three weeks. The fatal hour arrived,—alas! my agonies at parting were but forebodings of what I afterwards endured. Mrs. Rivers could not ſooth me; a kind of dreadful ſurmiſe continually haunted me, that we ſhould meet no more. We parted without a word, ſpechleſs woe denying every reſource but a laſt—laſt embrace.

"And now, my dear Louiſa, Mary muſt inform you the reſt; I have neither ſpirits to relate, or fortitude to hear it." So ſaying, ſhe walked ſlowly on, and Mary continued.

"Mr.

" Mr. Henry Rivers had not been gone long, before his uncle paid my miſtreſs a viſit, and ſeemed much reconciled; but alas! ſcarcely two months paſſed ſince my young maſter's departure, before his ſervant (the only one that attended him) returned mourning to England, with the dreadful news that his maſter in three weeks after they ſailed, had caught a fever, and after being delirious a few days, expired in his arms; that accidentally meeting an Engliſh ſhip, he put himſelf and his maſter's property aboard. Mrs. Rivers was unfortunately in town, at the receipt of this fatal intelligence, which being told her without caution, ſhe was ſo much affected, that after repeated faintings for two days, ſhe was ſeized with convulſions. My miſtreſs, from whom ſhe was never long abſent, became very uneaſy, and determined to go to town; but thoſe friends were deſtined to meet no more, for on her unexpected arrival at Mr. Rivers's houſe, her Henry's ſervant opened the door. Amazement for ſome time deprived her of ſpeech, but too ſoon was ſhe acquainted with her misfortune,

by

by their equivocal and unprepared anſwers.

This ſudden ſhock operated ſo violently on my dear miſtreſs, that her ſenſes quite forſook her, and by Mr. Rivers's order ſhe was removed to apartments in the neighbourhood, where the next morning in this unhappy ſtate, ſhe was delivered of a dead daughter, and the following evening cloſed the eyes of her amiable benefactreſs, to open no more but on her kindred angels.

" I uſed generally to go to the houſe in Kent once a month, to ſee my miſtreſs; and as Mr. Bennet (my huſband) lived in the city, I ſeldom ſaw Mrs. Rivers, except there, ſo was unacquainted with this tale of ſorrow till Mr. Bennet accidentally ſaw Mrs. Rivers's death in the papers. With heavy hearts we went directly to the town houſe; there I learned the dreadful ſtate of my miſtreſs, and flew to ſee her. She had then been ſix days deprived of reaſon, and it was much feared, if even her life was ſpared, that her intellects were quite ruined.

" I never

" I never left her for ſix weeks, at the end of which ſhe ſeemed to gather ſtrength, but had no appearance of recollection or returning ſenſe.

" Mr. Rivers ſent one day for my huſband; ' Mr. Bennet, ſaid he, I am extremely concerned at the ſtate of Maria, and think it would be beſt to have her entirely with you. Her fortune of two thouſand pounds is in the funds, I will add two thouſand more, which may ſupport you all at a diſtance in the country.

' I have no doubt of your care of her; if you approve my propoſal, I will make the money over to you for her uſe.' My huſband, after conſulting me, accepted the offer. We ſold our furniture, let our ſhop, which, with what little we had beſides, amounted to about a thouſand pounds more, and retired about forty miles from town. We ſeldom heard of Mr. Rivers, he having inſiſted on giving up her fortune, with the other ſum, entirely to my huſband's management.

" In about ſix months after we had been ſettled in the country, Mr. Bennet began to flatter me with hopes of her returning reaſon, as ſhe ſpoke more,

more, and frequently wept for hours. I had the delight to find him not miſtaken; for, by the time our firſt year in the country was expired, ſhe was ſenſible as at this hour, and recollected her huſband's death; but, till we acquainted her, knew nothing of Mrs. Rivers's. My huſband, enraptured, wrote Mr. Rivers an account of her recovery, but received a cold complimentary letter in return, in which he ſaid, Though he ſhould be always glad to hear of Maria's welfare, yet the great uneaſineſs ſhe had occaſioned, compelled him to wiſh to ſee her no more.

"So well was my miſtreſs's reaſon recovered, that we ſcrupled not to ſhew her the letter. 'Alas! ſaid ſhe, 'I pardon his unkindneſs; had Henry never known me, he would ſtill have had an heir: had he not been angry, never would he have conſented to his voyage —— Fatal hour!— — Mrs. Rivers loſt——My infant, all, all gone! Only me left to bewail, fearful even to mention my wiſhes, leſt my reaſon be ſtill ſuſpected.'——'Surely, my loved miſtreſs,' ſaid I, burſting into tears, 'we are not ſo cruel.' 'Do not cry, Ma-

ry,

ry, returned ſhe: I am not ungrateful, but I cannot reſpect Mr. Rivers; could I have my will, never ſhould he ſee or hear from me more: I have no friends but yourſelves, why not retire farther from him?' 'Name but your wiſhes, and calm your griefs, and we will go where you pleaſe,' ſaid Mr. Bennet.——'You are ever kind, my amiable friend,' replied ſhe, 'and I will tell you:' ſhe then mentioned this place, and the building a ſmall houſe here; 'there,' ſaid ſhe, 'free from the noiſe and buſtle of the world, I may aſſuage my ſorrow, and prepare myſelf for a happier ſtate.' In ſhort, ſhe preſt her ſuit with ſuch earneſtneſs, that my huſband ſoon conſented; and we came and ſettled at Kendal, where we employed a workman (after buying the land) to build the cottage, which, in leſs than a year, was made tenable. I ſhould not omit telling you, I left word if any letters came where we lived before, to ſend them to a perſon in London, who managed our money matters, but knew none of our connections, and they would remit them; but never has one line reached us from Mr. Rivers this more than

fifteen

fifteen years which we have been here. My dear Mr. Bennet lived but four years after we came to the cottage. My miſtreſs has been as compoſed as you could expect, though it is plain religion only teaches her to bear her griefs with moderation.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

LOUISA's Story began.

——————Fear not,
Sweet Innocence, thou ſtranger to offence,
And inward ſtorm! He, who yon ſkies involves
In frowns of darkneſs, ever ſmiles on thee
With kind regard.

THOMPSON's SEASONS.

MARY concluded her narrative: her miſtreſs's penſive ſtep had already reached the cot, her companions lingering behind, to prevent her hearing what might give ſo valuable a heart an additional pang. "Well, Louiſa, (ſaid ſhe, as they approached her), do you not think I had enough to drive me from the world to this peaceful ſpot?" "Really, madam, (returned

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THOMPSON's SEASONS.

MARY concluded her narrative: her miſtreſs's penſive ſtep had already reached the cot, her companions lingering behind, to prevent her hearing what might give ſo valuable a heart an additional pang. "Well, Louiſa, (ſaid ſhe, as they approached her), do you not think I had enough to drive me from the world to this peaceful ſpot?" "Really, madam, (returned

ed ſhe) were I to judge of mankind, by ſome I have lately met, your abſence is much to be envied; for though but ſeventeen, and only ſix weeks quitted a convent, I have had ſo diſguſting a taſte of ſociety, that never do I wiſh to mix in the great world again. ——But, with your permiſſion, I will now acquaint you with as much as I know myſelf of my unfortunate ſtory. ——Unfortunate well may I ſay, for never have I experienced a paternal bleſſing —— never the ſoft ſoothings of a fond mother——an innocent outcaſt even from my cradle!——

" The firſt I can remember was (I ſuppoſe about the age of five) parting from an honeſt country woman who had beeen my nurſe: the tears I ſhed, at parting from her, ſhe repaid with intereſt; but, in ſpite of both, a woman, who was to have the care of me, tore me from her embraces, and put me in a chaiſe, in which we travelled ſome miles, till we reached an inn, where we ſtopped to dinner. ——For two days we continued our journey, at the end of which time we embarked on board a veſſel that took us to Calais; after ſtopping one day,

we

we continued our route as far as Abbeville, where I was to be boarded in a convent.——On the day I was delivered to the care of the abbeſs, in the parlour was an Engliſh girl (about my own age) on the point of taking leave of a moſt amiable lady, who was her mother, and returning to England. For me, taking me from my nurſe, I regarded in ſo heinous a light, that brought me with ſo much indifference as to be noticed by the lady, whoſe daughter was in an agony of ſorrow. 'Julia, my love,' ſaid ſhe, her own voice faultering, 'obſerve this young lady, a lovely little companion for you, ſhe will learn you fortitude,—ſhe muſt, I am ſure, have parted from affectionate friends, yet bears it with reſignation.'—— With theſe words ſhe joined our hands. 'Indeed, madam,' ſaid I, 'had I a mamma to leave, I ſhould grieve as much as miſs; but I have none, only a poor mammy, and her they have taken from me; ſo now they may put me where they pleaſe.'—— The Counteſs of Melville (for that was the lady's name) immediately aſked the abbeſs of my family, who informed her

her I was an orphan, my name Louiſa Villars, and dependent on the bounty of my guardian, who had paid my board eight years in advance. 'I fear ſhe feels her dependence early,' continued ſhe, 'but ſhe ſhall not want a friend.'—The Counteſs applauded her, and entreated I might be Julia's companion. - Theſe ladies, I afterwards found, were old friends, being brought up together in a convent, and their ancient kindneſs had ſtill ſubſiſted, though the one had taken the veil, and the other returned to her own country, where, being married, ſhe was the mother of a ſon, and the ſweet Julia. The father of this pair, by a miſtaken notion of their being ſpoiled at home, inſiſted on their being put to ſchool. The ſon was accordingly ſent to Eton;——The Counteſs rather choſe (though more diſtant) to truſt her darling with her old friend, than at a public boarding-ſchool, eſpecially as Madame du Saint, the abbeſs, (though herſelf a rigid catholic) viewed every one that truly ſerved God (however different their forms) in as near a way to ſalvation as herſelf.

" The

" The young Julia, at her mother's requeſt that I might be her companion, threw her arms about my neck. 'No,' ſaid ſhe, 'ſhe ſhall be my ſiſter, then my mamma (as ſhe has none) will be hers; wont you, madam?' The amiable Counteſs put an arm round each: 'Yes, dear girls, I will be mother to both; they have hard hearts indeed, Louiſa, whom that countenance will not ſoften.' During this ſpeech, I had caught hold of her hand, and, burſting into tears, thanked her as well as my little heart, throbbing with gratitude, would permit.

" After repeatedly taking leave, and as often returning, the Counteſs and Julia parted; for a while we were very ſorrowful, but at length, time (that common reliever) ſoothed our grief, and we became excellent companions. We learned, played, and ſlept together. At my firſt arrival in the convent, I had not even been taught to read, but, on ſome pains taken with me, I learned with ſuch eagerneſs as delighted Madame du Saint, who treated us more with the

tenderneſs

tenderneſs of a mother than the ſuperiority of a miſtreſs.

" Eight years glided away imperceptibly ; the Counteſs had as many times viſited her daughter : not unmindful of her promiſe, ſhe honoured me with a degree of fondneſs, the more flattering, as, in her preſents to Julia, never was I forgotten At the end of this period, Julia returned to England for a ſhort time to viſit her father, whom ſhe had not ſeen for the time before mentioned. So grieved were we at parting, that the Counteſs intreated I might accompany her, promiſing to bring us both back in a month.——' Gladly, my dear madam, would I grant your requeſt,' ſaid Madame du Saint, ' but daily I expect to hear from her friends ; ſhould any of them come in her abſence, how could I excuſe it ?—The Counteſs acquieſced, and, with a promiſe of my friend's quick return, we parted.

" As the abbeſs ſurmiſed, ſo it happened ; for, about a week after, the perſon, who firſt brought me, paid us a viſit : I was called to the parlour, but had not the leaſt recollection of her again. She accoſted me with, ' Well, Louiſa, how do you do ? your friends

are

are not unmindful of you, I am come to pay four years more; great friendſhip all this, I hope you will deſerve it. I had no notion of friendſhip, but from lady Melville, and haſtily exclaimed, 'How does my dear mamma?—and when does Julia return?—'Mamma, miſs!' ſaid ſhe, heſitating. Madame du Saint remedied my miſtake, by explaining my calling a young lady in the convent ſiſter; and her mother permitting me to uſe that liberty with her. The woman preſently regained her conſequence, obſerving, 'young ladies ſhould not be too talkative nor aſk queſtions, but ſtay till their elders thought proper to ſatisfy them in every thing that was proper for them to know.' 'Believe me, madam,' ſaid I, with ſpirit, 'had I at firſt recollected you, the queſtion had been ſpared: were my Julia and her mother here, I ſhould have no enquiries beyond the convent walls.' Madame du Saint gave me a look of diſapprobation, and ordered me to my apartment. 'Stop, miſs, (ſaid Mrs Maſters, for ſo was ſhe called,) beware of ingratitude, your family has ſuffered ſeverely for it.' 'Indeed, madam, you accuſe me unjuſtly; I am extremely grateful for

for the happy ſituation I enjoy ; but you muſt pardon me if I prefer the friends I have ſeen, to thoſe who never honoured me with their preſence.' ' Well, miſs,' returned ſhe, ' let it paſs ; what improvements have you made ?' Madame du Saint informed her I ſpoke French and Italian, perfectly well ; and played on the harpſichord, and painted tolerably. Mrs. Maſters looked aſtoniſhed, and objected to the laſt articles, as increaſing the expence beyond what my guardian allowed. ' Not in the leaſt,' ſaid the abbeſs, ' we teach her ourſelves, and ſhe learns with ſuch facility, it is a pleaſure to inſtruct her. I have found her the gentleſt temper I ever met with, and am extremely ſorry ſhe has ſaid any thing to give you offence.' The kindneſs with which the abbeſs ſpoke forced from me what inſolence could not effect ; and the tears which pride had ſtifled found way, and rolled plenteouſly down my cheeks. ' If I have behaved in a manner to need an apology, from a lady like Madame du Saint, I am conſcious I am wrong. Pardon me, Madam (turning to Mrs. Maſters) the goodneſs of that lady, and ſome others, have ſpoiled me, but I will endeavour

to

to learn humility.' She was pleaſed to unbend her brow at my ſubmiſſion, ſaying ſhe had no doubt I ſhould be well provided for, if I merited it. After ſettling her buſineſs with the abbeſs (with whom ſhe left money to cloath me) ſhe made me happy by her departure. 'I am extremely ſorry,' ſaid Madame du Saint, 'that you ſhould ſay any thing Mrs. Maſters may conſtrue into an offence; ſhe may think you ill taught, and remove you to ſome other place; and, indeed, Louiſa, I ſhould be ſorry to part from you.' Had ſhe ſpoke for hours, ſhe could not have done it more effectually; the idea of being parted from my real friends, painted my imprudence in the ſtrongeſt light, and I promiſed, ſhould ſhe return again, to behave with the greateſt humility and circumſpection.

CHAP. IX.

LOUISA's Story continued.

He ſaw her charming, but he ſaw not half
The charms her downcaſt modeſty conceal'd:
That very moment love and chaſte deſire
Sprung in his boſom——.

THOMPSON'S SEASONS.

"THE Counteſs brought her daughter about the time appointed; Julia haſtily embraced the abbeſs, and flew to our apartment to ſeek me. After mutual careſſes, I informed her of the behaviour of Mrs. Maſters: 'Indeed,' replied the lively Julia, 'I have been as little happy as yourſelf, for of all the odd mortals, ſure my father is the ſtrangeſt: he has the gout to a violent degree,

degree, which adds to his native peeviſhneſs. Lady Melville bears all with the patience of a ſaint, appearing only to feel his ill humour when levelled at my brother or me. My brother, Louiſa, is the loveliеſt youth I ever ſaw, four years older than me, now in his ſeventeenth year; but I cannot deſcribe him; let his picture ſpeak for him'—ſo ſaying, ſhe ſhewed me a miniature of Lord Gray, on which, as we were paſſing our comments, Madame du Saint entered the room. 'Why, Julia,' ſaid ſhe, 'you have ſcarcely told me how you do; you were in ſuch a hurry to ſee your friend, that you forgot compliments: how do you like England?' 'Really, Madame, I don't know: I ſaw little but our own family: papa's gout was ſo bad, it entirely confined mamma; and he was ſo croſs, that, if I was cheerful, I was a hoyden a convent could not tame,——if ſerious, I had learnt gloomineſs from nuns who languiſhed for the world they had renounced in a pet. My brother, Lord Gray, was not more fortunate; if he read, he was a book-worm,——if gay, a ſpendthrift,—if grave, he was con-

ſidering what was the beſt game to loſe his eſtate at, for he perfectly well knew that hazard and billiards were attended to at Oxford (where my brother has lately been) with more avidity than literature.' I know not how long Julia would have run on, had not Madame du Saint interrupted her gravely, with, 'You are ſpeaking of your father, Lady Julia;—but whoſe picture have you there?' 'My brother's, Madam,' ſaid ſhe (preſenting it) 'he is to travel in three years, at which time we may hope to ſee him; and, as I would not have Louiſa a ſtranger to her relations, I have brought this likeneſs that ſhe may know him when they meet.' 'Your father ſaid with great juſtneſs, a convent had not tamed you,' replied Madame du Saint, ſmiling; 'for you are a little madcap.'

"I ſhall paſs over three years, in which nothing material happened at the convent; Lady Julia was in continual expectancy of being ſent for home. For me, I knew I had more than a year to ſtay, from the money advanced by Mrs. Maſters; how much longer was uncertain, and would to me have been immaterial had Julia remained;

mained; but I looked forward to her departure with the utmoſt regret.

" At length the dreaded time arrived, the Counteſs of Melville came to Abbeville, her ſon attending her; he was on his route to Paris, but had gained permiſſion to ſee his ſiſter in his way. Lady Melville purpoſed returning to England in three weeks with her daughter: and, that ſhe might not be ſeparated from her ſon before he ſet out for Paris, hired an hotel ready furniſhed. My friend, Julia, took her leave of the convent the day after her arrival; the ſorrow of both parties was ſo violent, and Lady Melville ſo warmly entreated Madame du Saint, that ſhe gave permiſſion I ſhould paſs the days with Julia at their hotel, when they did not come to the convent.

" Lady Julia and myſelf made good uſe of the permiſſion obtained; we were never aſunder. The day of my firſt viſit, Lady Melville happened to be out with a lady ſhe formerly knew in the convent, and Julia introduced me to her brother. 'Auguſtus,' ſaid ſhe, 'receive your other ſiſter; though laſt, do not let her be leaſt in your affection.' He ſaluted me reſpectfully.

'Your requeſt is eaſily granted, Julia; would Miſs Villars deign to favour me with her friendſhip, on my part it could not be ſecondary.' Totally unuſed to the converſation of men, I ſtammered out, 'You do me honour, my Lord,'—and remained ſilent. Lady Melville entered almoſt immediately; and, after common compliments, obſerved I was grave. 'I'll give you the reaſon, madam,' ſaid Julia, 'ſhe is aſhamed before my brother; I know by myſelf, when I was in England, and for years had ſeen no man but our old jolly prieſt, who uſed to ſay maſs to the nuns, I was afraid to look my father in the face; and his croſs looks did not decreaſe my fear,' continued ſhe, whiſpering her brother, too low to be heard by the Counteſs, who had taken my hand. 'Peace! wild girl: I wiſh Louiſa had ſome of your ſpirits; ſhe is too much affected at loſing ſuch a mad-cap: but, my dear girl, (turning to me), ſhould your friends take you from the protection of Madame du Saint, (as doubtleſs by your age they ſoon will) and things in England ſhould not anſwer your wiſhes, in Lady Melville ſhall you find realized,

lized, the tender appellation you formerly honoured me with.'—— Lord Gray joined us ere I could anſwer; he had been at the window with Julia, and I could only thank the Counteſs with a look, which, had it ſpoke my ſoul, meant reſpect and everlaſting gratitude. 'Do you know, Madam,' ſaid he, 'you poſſeſs a treaſure without knowing it?—Miſs Villars's picture.' It is without knowing it indeed, Auguſtus, if I have it.' 'Then, Madam, when you return to Weſt Park, look in the gallery at that inimitable picture of Hope, and if you do not allow the juſtice of what I advance, I will ſubmit never to give my opinion of likeneſſes again.' 'Really, on recollection,' ſaid ſhe, 'it is a ſtrong reſemblance; but now you talk of pictures, Louiſa and Julia ſhall exchange portraits before they part: Louiſa's will remind you, Julia, how well gravity ſits on a young woman; and yours will, I hope, remind Louiſa that ſhe has a ſiſter.'

"Lady Melville took us in the afternoon to the houſe of a painter, to whom we ſat, on his promiſing to finiſh the miniatures in a fortnight. As

the day was fine, we all preferred walking to the uſe of the carriage: juſt as we reached home, two Engliſh gentlemen, whom the Counteſs knew, overtook us; and, as they expreſſed a deſire to ſee Lord Gray before his departure, ſhe entreated their company to tea. 'Auguſtus,' ſaid Lady Melville, 'I bring you two welcome viſitants, Lord Caſtlebrook, and Mr. Danvers.——'Caſtlebrook, I rejoice to ſee you; Mr. Danvers, you do me honour.—Gentlemen, give me leave to introduce you to my ſiſters.'—'I have ever heard,' ſaid Mr. Danvers, 'Lady Melville ſpoke of as poſſeſſing the moſt extenſive humanity; common report for once was true; for nothing but the general peace of mankind could have induced her to hide two ſuch divinities ſo long in a cloiſter.'—I ſaw the bluſh which warmed my cheeks at this compliment reflected on Julia's, and the timidity ſhe laughed at in the morning, ſhe felt in the evening.

"The gentlemen remained at Lady Melville's till the time I returned to the convent. When that lady ordered the coach to be ready to take me home, our viſitors ſeemed extremely ſurpriſed.

ſurpriſed. 'I beg pardon, Madam,' ſaid Mr. Danvers, 'but does not this young Lady return to England with you?' 'No,' ſaid ſhe, 'her friends wiſh her to remain ſome time longer in France.'

"I ſoon after wiſhed them a good night, and returned home, attended by the Counteſs's woman, and Lord Gray, who inſiſted on accompanying us to the convent gate.

"I had ſcarcely paid my devoirs to Madame du Saint in the morning when the Counteſs's coach arrived for me; it was not too ſoon for my wiſhes; I haſtily entered it, and in a quarter of an hour embraced Julia. Lady Melville was rather indiſpoſed, and had deſired not to be diſturbed; Lord Gray and his ſiſter were at breakfaſt alone. 'I know not how, ſaid Julia, 'I am to live in that foggy climate where I am going without you, Louiſa, for in this pure air I ſcarcely exiſt in your abſence.' 'Affection, my dear Julia, makes every air ſalutary,' replied I: 'you have Lady Melville; ——but what remains for me, when with yourſelf you take from me all that makes life deſirable?' 'You are

unjuſt to give all your gentle wiſhes to England,' ſaid Lord Gray; 'reſerve a ſmall portion for the continent, they ſhall be repaid with intereſt, I aſſure you.' 'I muſt ever eſteem every one related to Julia, my Lord, in whatever clime heaven may place either them or me.'—'Happy they, Miſs Villars, who poſſeſs your eſteem, but doubly bleſt they, who, like Julia, can boaſt your affection.' Lady Melville ſoon joined us; and ſhortly after the ſervant announced Lord Caſtlebrook and Mr. Danvers: thoſe gentlemen remained with us all day. The former, when he addreſſed Julia, it was with an emotion, that, unexperienced as we were, was not loſt upon us. When we were alone, I mentioned it, 'It is very true,' ſaid ſhe, 'I obſerved it, and am pleaſed he is to remain abroad two or three years: I ſhould not chuſe to be continually in company with ſuch an amiable man; perhaps I might humour myſelf by liking him, while on his ſide, it might only be unmeaning gallantry. My brother told me this morning, he thought of making the tour with him; for Mr. Danvers he is on his return; but what think

think you of him, Louiſa? for I am ſure he thinks of you. Laſt night when you returned home, he aſked mamma your name and family; ſhe informed him the firſt; but ſaid, I have not the honour to be acquainted with the laſt. She is an amiable girl, and I ſincerely wiſh ſhe was returning to England, for Julia will leave her heart in the convent. 'Has ſhe been long in France?' ſaid Danvers. 'Something more than eleven years: ſhe was then about five; Julia and ſhe went under the care of Madame du Saint, the ſame day.' He politely thanked the Counteſs for her information. Now what think you, Louiſa? has not this man ſome reaſons for his queſtions?" ——'I hope not,' replied I, 'there is a confidence about him that makes him diſagreeable; beſide, my dear girl, from my being with you, he may imagine me a girl of fortune; were he aſſured to the contrary, I dare ſay, I ſhould not be worth a thought.'

"In fine, my dear madam, I was at Lady Melville's every day for a fortnight? our Engliſh viſitors, during that ſpace,

ſpace, never omitted paying their compliments to the Counteſs.

" One morning, when I went as uſual, I found the Counteſs and Julia alone. ' I have received a letter concerning you, Louiſa, this morning: I may as well inform you of the contents, before Julia; for I ſuppoſe you are miſtreſſes of each other's ſecrets; but here's the letter, let it ſpeak for itſelf,' ſaid ſhe, preſenting it. It was nearly in theſe words.

" I know not how to apologize for " troubling your ladyſhip; but my " utter ignorance of Miſs Villars's " family muſt plead for me: could " you, through your intimacy with " the abbeſs, favour me with their " addreſs, I would wait on them, and " beg permiſſion to lay myſelf and " fortune at the amiable Louiſa's " feet."

" To this purport was the letter. ' Well, Louiſa,' ſaid the Counteſs, ' what think you?—You may convince Mrs. Maſters, when ſhe comes, you can be well provided for, without her aſſiſtance. Mr. Danvers's eſtate is large, himſelf amiable, and I think you can have no objection of informing her, when

when ſhe returns, of this generous propoſal.'

'Believe me, Madam, I am thoroughly ſenſible of my unhappy dependent ſtate; but, ſeverely as I feel it, I would not change, by repaying Mr. Danvers's generoſity with ingratitude; for, young as I am, if I know my own heart, I could not eſteem him. Pardon my boldneſs, Madam, but let me intreat you not to have this affair mentioned to Mrs. Maſters, who doubtleſs will be glad to get me off her hands. For Mr. Danvers, when he knows I have no one (except your ladyſhip) who intereſt themſelves about me, beyond the common wants of nature, I hope he will think me unworthy, and forget any little prepoſſeſſion he may have entertained in my favour.' 'My dear girl,' returned ſhe, 'do not diſtreſs yourſelf, it ſhall not, if you diſlike it, be mentioned. I will anſwer Mr. Danvers as well as I can.—But I have another propoſal to make you: as Mrs. Maſters ſpoke of you as dependent on your guardian, if they approve it, I will take the trouble off their hands, and think myſelf much their debtor. I ſhall deſire the abbeſs to propoſe it when

when Mrs. Maſters comes, for ſhe has no direction to them; indeed their paying ſo many years board in advance, had always an air of privacy, as if they feared more frequent payments would put them to the neceſſity of coming over, or giving drafts, by which they might be known.'—

'Ah, Madam! half an hour ſince I thought Lady Melville could not confer on me more obligations than I had already received;—but how can I thank you for this laſt, this generous offer?'——'By ſaying nothing about it,' ſaid ſhe, 'but wiſhing Maſters may come ſoon, and accept my propoſal. I have not ſeen Madame du Saint today; I will go and talk of this matter with her.'

"Lord Gray, and his friend Caſtlebrook, came in ſoon after; the firſt of thoſe gentlemen appeared thoughtful. 'What is the matter, Auguſtus?' ſaid Julia. 'I have an extreme pain in my head,' replied he; 'but it will paſs off, heed it not.' 'Perhaps the air may remove it,' ſaid Lord Caſtlebrook; 'what ſay you to a walk in your own garden?' 'I think it would be of eſſential ſervice to me, if the ladies will favour

vour us with their company? *Alons donc!* ſaid Julia, 'if you promiſe to return quite well, we agree.' Lord Caſtlebrook immediately offered his hand to Julia. Lord Gray followed his example to me, and we walked into a delightful garden that joined the houſe.

"I remarked on giving my hand to Lord Gray, he trembled extremely. (Julia and her companion walked gaily on,) Alas! my Lord I fear you are worſe, I will call Julia back.' 'A moment, I entreat you, charming Miſs Villars——pardon me ——pardon my abruptneſs, when I beg you to inform me whether Danvers is happy enough to meet your approbation.' 'He is rather happy, my Lord,' ſaid I, extremely confuſed, 'in not meeting it; the approbation of an unfortunate, like me, would be of little ſervice to any one.'

'Thanks, amiable Louiſa!—— I live, I breathe again; were the world Danvers's, I ſhould not envy him, could I but obtain a ſmall portion of that gentle affection which ſo apparently beams in thoſe heaven-illumined eyes —I then were ſupremely bleſt.' 'Forbear, my Lord,' ſaid I, withdrawing

ing my hand, which as he ſpoke he preſt to his lips; 'you forget what is due to yourſelf and me; if this be the gallantry I have heard is practiſed in the great world, pray beſtow it where it is better underſtood; think not the favours of Lady Melville, beſtowed on one who would encourage her ſon to behave in a manner unbecoming his rank and future proſpects in life.' 'Cruel Louiſa, why tell me of favours?—to Lady Melville—to the whole world, will I avow my unalterable affection.'

"Lady Julia had reached the end of the walk, and now appeared in ſight on her return.' 'Come, my Lord,' ſaid I, 'let us haſte to meet your ſiſter.' 'Pardon me firſt,' returned he, 'and do not hate me.' 'Promiſe to offend no more, and your pardon is granted.' Grant me one more requeſt then, and I will promiſe any thing, and keep my word with the moſt religious ſtrictneſs.'—'Name it, my Lord.' 'Do not engage yourſelf to marry any one within this twelvemonth.'—'I believe I may venture to make that promiſe without danger (ſaid I, ſmiling), as I ſhall remain

main in the convent that portion of time at leaſt.'

" Lord Caſtlebrook and Julia now joined us, and we haſtened home to dinner, as it grew near the hour."

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Louisa's Story continued.

——thou know'ſt not half the love he bears thee:
Whene'er he ſpeaks of thee, his heart's in flames;
He ſends out all his ſoul in ev'ry word,
And thinks, and talks, and looks like one tranſported.
Unhappy youth! How will thy coldneſs raiſe
Tempeſt and ſtorms in his afflicted boſom!

ADDISON'S CATO.

"THE Counteſs returned ſoon after—ſhe had brought home the miniatures. 'Wear thoſe, my dear girls,' ſaid ſhe, 'till you meet again, which I hope will be ſhortly.' We fixed them round each other's necks, not without a ſigh at the idea of our approaching ſeparation.

"Mr.

" Mr. Danvers came in ſoon after; he carefully ſought an opportunity to ſpeak to me, which I avoided as much as poſſible.

" I gave Julia an item I had ſomething to ſay to her: and at the time I took my leave, ' I wiſh, madam,' ſaid ſhe to the Counteſs, ' you would permit me to ſleep to night in the convent; I have not half taken leave of ſome I reſpect much——Go,' ſaid the indulgent mother,' and return with Louiſa ſoon in the morning.'

" No ſooner were we alone, than I opened my whole heart to Julia, and informed her of my fixed reſolution of telling Lady Melville what had paſſed.' Well,' ſaid ſhe laughing, ' what can my mother ſay to it? She, I believe, would be as happy to ſee you Lady Gray, as Auguſtus could be to make you ſo; but my father is a ſtrange mortal, ſo let the year of probation paſs: he cannot ſteal you out of the convent. My mother, if ſhe knew, out of miſtaken duty, might tell my father, and the poor fellow would lead an ill life, for darling

ing to have a choice that was not made through his ſpectacles.'

" We chatted beſt part of the night; and in the morning after compliments to the abbeſs, haſtened to Lady Melville. 'Well, Louiſa,' ſaid ſhe, 'I have given Mr. Danvers as genteel a denial as I poſſibly could, but I fear you will not get quit of him ſo eaſily; he regards my ſaying I am not acquainted with your friends, as an evaſive method of excuſing myſelf from favouring his pretenſions.'

'When I am entirely in the convent, as at your Ladyſhip's departure I ſhall be, abſence will cure ſo ill-placed a paſſion.' Lord Gray entering put an end to our diſcourſe. 'I have had letters from England this morning,' ſaid Lady Melville; 'your father, Auguſtus, thinks you almoſt at Paris; and indeed it is time you were ſet out.'—'My father, my dear madam, forgets how difficult it is to part from thoſe we love:' (kiſſing the Counteſs's hand.) —'Yet more,' ſaid ſhe, 'he expects us home in a week at fartheſt; and he would be exceedingly diſpleaſed did you not depart firſt, ſo what think you

of

of to-morrow? we muſt go the day following.' 'What time you pleaſe I ſhall ſubmit,' ſaid Auguſtus, ſighing; 'but I muſt ſend Lord Caſtlebrook word to prepare, as we go to Paris together.'

"Lord Gray left Abbeville at the time appointed. The evening before, when he attended me as uſual to the convent gate, he ſaluted me reſpectfully: 'Farewell, Miſs Villars; ſometimes favour with a place in your remembrance, a man from whom your idea will never be abſent.'—'Adieu, my Lord!—every felicity attend you,' ſaid I, ringing at the convent gate, which the portreſs immediately opening, he threw himſelf into the coach (which the governeſs had not quitted on account of a violent ſhower of rain) and returned home.

"I took care to be rather late in my attendance at Lady Melville's the next morning. Lord Gray was ſet out more than an hour. Julia was alone, and her eyes ſtill bright with tears. 'I have felt ſeverely to-day,' ſaid ſhe; 'but what ſhall I ſuffer to-morrow, to part from the ſiſter of my heart? Poor

Poor Auguſtus, too, has by no means a mind at eaſe ; the uncertainty of your ſituation—fear of finding your affections engaged at his return—all conſpire to torment him ; for heaven's ſake, my dear girl, think of him with kindneſs ; do not love the ſiſter and hate the brother ; divide your partiality between us.' ' Good heaven ! ſaid I, interrupting her, ' do I hear, you an advocate for diſobedience and ingratitude ? You own the uncertainty of my ſituation, yet urge me to encourage Lord Gray to act in a manner that muſt for ever eſtrange him from his parents. For ſhame, Julia ! ſhake off this girliſh folly, nor let the entreaties of your brother, hurried on by a youthful paſſion, make you forget what is due to his family and honour.'

' Unkind Louiſa ! what, if prevailed on by Auguſtus's ſighs to ſtep a little aſide from duty, and plead his paſſion, were you his ſiſter, and I Louiſa, would you not do as much ? I have ſeen his uneaſineſs ſome time, and teazed the cauſe from him, by promiſing to be his advocate, and to keep his

ſecret

ſecret inviolate ; both which I will ſtrictly perform.

" We paſſed the day together ; every little abſence of Lady Melville's Julia employed in interceding for her brother ; and though I would by no means promiſe her to think of him with tenderneſs, to you, my dear madam, let every ſecret of my heart be diſcovered. I own,' continued Louiſa, deeply bluſhing, ' did my fortune permit, I could eſteem Lord Gray beyond all mankind; nay more, I ſhould have told Julia ſo, had it been an indifferent perſon, but. ſhe loved her brother too well to keep any thing from him ſhe imagined concerned his peace.

" The next morning ſeparated me from Lady Melville and my friend Julia ; painful to this hour is our parting; our voices, interrupted with ſighs, could only ſob,——farewell Julia, adieu Louiſa. The Counteſs, ever gentle mediatrix, reminded us Mrs. Maſters's time of coming would ſoon arrive ; that ſhe had no doubt of her offer being accepted, and then we might remain together the reſt of our lives. At laſt they got in the carriage——I

hid

hid my face that I might not ſee them depart——Madame du Saint's rhetoric being vain, till tears exhauſted my ſource of ſorrow.

" My ſweet friend arrived ſafe in England; often did ſhe favour me with letters; if Auguſtus was mentioned, it was without particularity, as ſhe well knew the abbeſs ſaw all letters that were received by the boarders in the convent.

" Near ten months had paſſed ſince their departure; when one day I was deſired to go down to the parlour; I obeyed, and to my great ſurpriſe, found Mrs. Maſters, whom I did not expect for two months at leaſt. ' Merciful goodneſs,' exclaimed ſhe, as I entered, ' how ſhe is grown! I proteſt ſhe is quite a woman.' Remembering how I diſpleaſed her, in her laſt viſit, I accoſted her with the greateſt reſpect, which made her obſerve I was much improved in my manners as well as perſon; that it was entirely in her power to leave me in the convent three years longer, or take me back to England with her; that, as I ſeemed to know how to behave myſelf, ſhe believed ſhe ſhould do the latter. Madame

me du Saint mentioned the Counteſs's deſire of having me with her, adding I ſhould be equally her care with her own daughter.

'I do not know what anſwer to give,' ſaid Mrs. Maſters, 'but will name it to the young lady's guardian; if he approve it, we can inform the lady on our return. For you, Miſs Villars, prepare yourſelf to leave the convent to-morrow morning, as I ſhall call for you at that time, and indeed muſt return to England as ſoon as I can a little recover my fatigue.' A bow of obedience was all the anſwer in my power; but when I ſaw her depart, my tears found way. 'Alas! ſaid I, 'where is this woman going to take me? You ſee, madam, there is no hope of her letting me be with Lady Melville, nay, ſhe fears you eſteem me, which makes her determined to hurry my departure. Good God! to what ſecret horrid place am I going? Would to heaven I could die, and eſcape both her and him ſhe calls my guardian, for my idea of him is equal to the diſlike I have to her.'

'You are unjuſt, my dear child, to form raſh conjectures of thoſe you

never ſaw, by the behaviour of a low-bred woman, who I dare ſay is nothing more than a ſervant; think how in your infant years, the Almighty placed you where you have ever been happy. What have you done to doubt his protection? be virtuous, and you have no cauſe to fear.' 'Their ſecret manner of behaviour, my dear madam,' returned I, 'is what alarms me; why ſhould even their names be concealed if their deeds were fit to ſee the light? I am apt to think they would not be ſo darkly tranſacted.'

'You know, my dear Louiſa, the Counteſs of Melville will always be happy to give you an aſylum ſhould you want it; nay more, to calm your fears, if any thing ſhould happen, to render that inconvenient, return to this peaceful habitation; though not greatneſs, here you ſhall meet content. For the preſent you muſt prepare yourſelf to attend Mrs. Maſters; a viſible reluctance to go with her, at all events, muſt injure you in her opinion; appearances are often deceitful, you may be very differently ſituated to what you expect; and here, my dear Louiſa,' continued ſhe, giving me a ſmall paper

paper from her pocket-book, 'is an Engliſh note I received in payment, ſome time ſince; at all events, it will enable you to reach either the counteſs or me.'

"It is needleſs, my dear madam, to repeat to you my thanks to the abbeſs, or my ſorrow at parting from her, for Mrs. Maſters was true to her time. My tears, at ſeeing myſelf ſhut on the outſide the convent gate, amazed my conductreſs, who exclaimed,——'Well, bleſs me, but this is ſurprizing; a girl of ſeventeen crying to leave a nunnery!——ſure you have ſomething more engaging than the company of women, and thoſe old ones?' Yes, Madam,' ſaid I, piqued at her manner of treating me, 'we have peace, harmony, and confidence in each other.' 'And you have not much in me? but, Miſs, let me tell you, after what has been done for you, a different mode of behaviour would better become the education beſtowed on you; if you were going with your Lady Melville, there would not be all this crying, I ſuppoſe.' 'I have the honour to be perfect-

ly acquainted with Lady Melville, madam,' returned I, 'and you, to whom I owe the maintenance of ſo many years, I have not that pleaſure. 'Well, well, if that be all, we ſhall be better acquainted by and by; but dry your eyes, for we are almoſt at our home.' Mrs. Maſters reſided at the moſt capital inn in the town; I carefully avoided mentioning I had been out before, for fear of giving her offence. A genteel dinner was provided for us, of which Mrs. Maſters, after eating heartily, and drinking more wine than I thought became a woman, proteſted ſhe was ſtill much fatigued, and, if I would excuſe it, could take a nap. I entreated I might not prevent her; that with her permiſſion I would take a walk the while in a garden I ſaw from the window. 'Go child,' ſaid ſhe, 'I ſhall not ſleep long.' I obeyed, directing my ſteps to the garden, which, had they been left to their natural inſtinct, would have returned to the convent.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

LOUISA's Story continued.

How will my boſom ſwell with anxious joy,
When I behold her ſtruggling in my arms,
With glowing beauty and diſorder'd charms;
While fear and anger, with alternate grace,
Pant in her breaſt, and vary in her face.

ADDISON's CATO.

" AN arbour terminated my walk; on the bench of which, throwing myſelf, I gave vent to the feelings of my heart; till ſuddenly the ſound of feet interrupted me, and the moment after preſented to my aſtoniſhed eyes Mr. Danvers!

'Am I ſo happy,' ſaid he, 'once more to enjoy the pleaſure of ſeeing Miſs Villars, without which, I was determined never to quit France! For ten months painful watching, how greatly am I overpaid!' 'I had hoped, Sir,' replied I, 'when Lady Melville informed you, your affections were ſo ill placed (as want of birth and fortune muſt make them) you would have forgot a paſſion, the object of which can only think reſpectfully of your generoſity.'

'Unkind Miſs Villars!' returned he; 'it is your partiality to Lord Gray makes you refuſe doing juſtice to me——to yourſelf——for my fortune equals his——my paſſion none can equal. What elſe could keep me ten months reſident at an inn, where I knew every one that came to the convent muſt leave their horſes, and by that means I migh learn your family, or ſee yourſelf if you returned to your own country?' 'Believe me, Sir,' ſaid I 'the friendſhip I have for Lady Melville, and her amiable daughter, are alone the occaſion of what you call partiality to her ſon; or if I did

eſteem

eſteem him I think it needs no apology; but as a friend, who is now my conductreſs home, is not apprized of my ever being out of the convent, you will grant me a favour by not noticing your having ſeen me before.' 'Hard as that condition muſt be,' ſaid he, 'to any one acquainted with Miſs Villars, I acquieſce, but I have already ſeen your governeſs, whom I contrived to be introduced to laſt night; from her I learned ſhe came to fetch home a young lady named Villars, who had reſided in this convent ſomething more than twelve years, which, ſhe ſaid, from the time of her entering, ſhe had never quitted; by that, my charming girl, I found ſhe was unacquainted with your viſits to Lady Melville, conſequently your ſecret was ſafe in my boſom.'

"There was a confidence in his manner made me repent my ever having quitted the convent to viſit Julia, as it put me to the diſagreeable neceſſity of being obliged to a man I could not reſpect. I roſe to return to the houſe as he finiſhed ſpeaking, and attempted to take my leave, thanking

him for his generous intentions; but entreating him to deſiſt from purſuing an object who could never return his paſſion. 'And will you leave me ſo?' ſaid he. 'Is this the reward of my ten months painful watching? Is it poſſible, ſo fair a boſom ſhould cover an obdurate heart? Thank me, at leaſt, for keeping your ſecret.' As he ſpoke he caught me in his arms.

"Keeping my ſecret would be too dearly paid for, did it ſubject me to inſolence,' ſaid I, breaking from him and quitting the arbour. He followed me apologizing for his conduct, to which, as I made no anſwer, by the time we reached the houſe he appeared as much diſſatisfied with what he termed my pride, as I was with his impertinence.

Mrs. Maſters was ſtill ſleeping; how much did I wiſh ſhe was a perſon to whom I could unboſom myſelf! Unuſed to ſecrecy, how painfully did I feel it! But a dread of her ſealed my lips, and I locked up my thoughts in my own breaſt, rather than participate them with one I could not think my friend.

"She

" She did not leave me long in my reverie; for, yawning, ſhe proteſted ſhe was guilty of prodigious rudeneſs. I really was vain enough to think ſhe was going to apologize to me, but was ſoon convinced of my error, for, riſing and adjuſting her cap, ſhe continued, ' You muſt know, child, laſt night the landlady entreated me to permit an Engliſh gentleman to drink tea with us, and, as one is always glad to ſee our country folks, I readily conſented; indeed he was a vaſt addition to our party, for he is a moſt agreeable man, and promiſed me his company this evening. I ſhould be ſorry to appear ſo ill bred as to forget my engagements.' ' Excuſe me, madam,' ſaid I, extremely diſconcerted to find they were already ſo well acquainted——' as the gentleman is to you a ſtranger, perhaps the engagement is as well broke as kept.' ' Pſhaw! you are quite a little prude, and it is ridiculous to be angry with you; time will learn you life.'

' As far as is conſiſtent with prudence, and the dignity of my ſex, I hope it will.'

'The dignity of a fiddleſtick!' exclaimed ſhe, and began humming a tune: how long ſhe might have exerted her vocal powers I know not, if Mr. Danvers had not been announced. But before I mention this meeting, I muſt give you ſome idea of the perſon of Mrs. Maſters. She ſeemed about the age of forty-four, her features appeared to have been tolerably handſome, without ever being ſtrikingly agreeable; or an extreme colour, which ſpread over her face, and the corpulence of her ſhape, which took from her every appearance of delicacy, perhaps made me judge too haſtily.

"She received Mr. Danvers with the freedom of an old acquaintance, and the evening, between them, paſſed joyouſly. For my part, my utter ignorance of what ſhe termed life, though it might prevent my ſhining in their converſation, ſaved me from comprehending ſeveral witticiſms inconſiſtent with the ſenſe allotted to man, and derogatory to the modeſty of woman; at leaſt their loud laughs and ſignificant looks, made me judge this

this was the ſpecies of wit, dignified by the name of double entendre. In the courſe of the evening, Mr. Danvers ſaid he was obliged to return to England in a few days, and entreated permiſſion to ſee us ſafe acroſs the water. As Mrs. Maſters did not ſeem to underſtand the language of denial, leave was ſoon obtained; for I was too inſignificant to be conſulted.

" The following day we went to Calais, and the next I trod on my native land, and, notwithſtanding my long abſence, and that before I had knowledge of countries, a pleaſing veneration ſeized me on entering it; every thing gave pleaſure, nor did I ſee a face (except my conductors) but on which (to my thoughts) I could delineate benevolence and virtue.

" Mrs. Maſters had conſtantly declared her averſion to having any one ſleep with her, but permitted me to lie in the ſame chamber; on the night of our ſtay at Dover, we could not procure a room with two beds, as they aſſured us they were all occupied, but I might have a chamber very near my conductreſs's; for her, ſhe

was

was ſo taken up with the attention paid her by Mr. Danvers, that ſhe ſeemed to forget propriety in her own conduct—no wonder ſhe neglected it to me.

"It was propoſed we ſhould riſe early, that we might reach London next day; at which place, Mrs. Maſters informed me, ſhe ſhould remain one day, and then continue her journey to the north of England; 'there' ſaid ſhe 'I ſhall reſign my charge.' Though I had no bright idea of my guardian, yet was any thing, I thought, to be preferred to her. For Danvers, I began to look on him as one of thoſe men of whom I had read, that ſuddenly transfer violent paſſions from one object to another, and pleaſed myſelf I was quit of his importunity.

"When we parted for the night, Mrs. Maſters deſired me to be ready by ſix at lateſt; 'for,' continued ſhe, 'we will go ſixteen miles before breakfaſt, by that means we ſhall be in town early.' On returning to my chamber, I locked my door, and examined every place very carefully; for, though I had hopes Danvers had given

ven me up, I could not ceaſe to fear him.

" Uneaſy thoughts, ever buſy when our heads preſs the pillow, obtruded themſelves, and prevented my ſleeping; always uſed to the profoundeſt tranquillity, the continual buſtle and noiſe of an inn did not a little aſſiſt in diſturbing me; and I counted the clock ſtrike two, ere I cloſed my eyes. I ſlept perfectly ſound till the maid, by a gentle tap, informed me it was time to riſe: as it was the month of November, and the morning exceeding dark, ſhe brought a light, which, as ſhe gave to my hand, ſhe deſired me to ſpeak low, for a lady was very ſick in the next room; 'and' continued ſhe, 'the gentlewoman that came with you has been very angry with me for letting you ſleep ſo long; ſhe is dreſſed, and already below.'

" I made as much haſte as poſſible, and went down to the parlour; Mr. Danvers's ſervant was ſtanding at the door; 'Mrs. Maſters is already in the chaiſe, miſs, ſaid he, 'and my maſter on horſeback' (the way he travelled). I jumped into the chaiſe, begging

begging pardon of Mrs. Maſters, who, wrapped up in her long cloak and calaſh, appeared either half aſleep, or violently out of humour. As ſhe made no anſwer to my apologies, I remained ſilent for near half an hour, when I was ſhook from my inattention by a church clock at ſome diſtance ſtriking five. 'Bleſs me, madam,' ſaid I, 'I thought you did not intend to ſet out till ſix; it is now only five. She ſtill made no anſwer: a kind of horror ſeized me.—'For God's ſake, madam, if I have offended you, pardon and ſpeak to me.' In my energy I caught hold of her hand. 'It is impoſſible to keep ſilence when ſo beautiful a pleader ſues,' ſaid the voice of Danvers, whom, to my extreme confuſion, I now found to be my companion.

END OF VOL. I.